The complete fisherman

Walter Matthew Gallichan

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THE COMPLETE BRIDGE PLAYER

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THE GOLFER'S GUIDE

By A. Butler, with Preface by Dr Macnamara

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THE COMPLETE FISHERMAN

(Illustrated)

BY

WALTER M. GALLICHAN

AUTHOR OF "FISHING IN WALES,"
"FISHING IN DERBYSHIRE," ETC.

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The Complete Fisherman

I

INTRODUCTION

THE art of capturing fish with the rod and line is a sport that custom cannot stale. Angling is so varied, interesting, and complex that the all-round fisherman encounters new adventures and learns a fresh lesson in his craft every time that he takes a rod in his hand. The elusiveness of fish, their capacity for storing experiences, the influence of weather, the variability of seasons, the natural changes affecting rivers—all tend to perpetuate the deep interest that fishing affords to the ardent and observant devotee. The pursuit of fish is not only a healthy and

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restful recreation; it may be regarded as part of one's education in life; for fishing greatly quickens the powers of observation, assists in forming judgments upon cause and effect, trains the hands in skill, cultivates the virtue of patience, and brings one into fascinating intimacy with Nature in her many moods.

Possibly a few half-hearted fishermen have abandoned the recreation, but I have never met one of these backsliders. I have known sportsmen who have laid the gun aside; the anglers who bid a final farewell to the entrancing sport of the rod are exceedingly rare. And I firmly believe that many men past the years of threescore and ten have prolonged their lives, and undoubtedly retained good health and an interest in living, through devotion to fishing. Many rod fishermen

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enjoy their pastime so thoroughly and seriously that it becomes something greater than a mere hobby. One can understand the rejoinder of Stoddart, who, when a friend asked what was his present occupation, said: "Mon, I'm an angler!"

A long list of notable names could be set down to prove that good fishermen have excelled and made history in other fields of activity besides fishing; and I think that it could not be considered extravagant to ascribe some of their higher achievements and success to the discipline endured and the faculty of observation and reflection cultivated by the riverside. And can there be any doubt that the serene and solitary periods of these men's lives by the river and loch enabled them to preserve that sanity of mind and vigour of body which are the essentials of

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successful struggle against the trials that beset the career of the artist, the philosopher, or the man of business?

No man can hope to become a past-master of every branch of angling. But it is quite possible to attain proficiency in several styles of fishing; and the fisherman who can lure roach from a clear pond, cast a fly for trout upon a pellucid stream, and reel for mackerel in the bay, need never be at a loss for wholesome outdoor recreation throughout the year.

Suitable and trustworthy implements are necessary for the successful pursuit of fishing; but this does not mean that the well-equipped angler need expend extravagant sums upon his tackle. Many very pretty things in the way of rods, reels and landing-nets are put upon the

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market by makers and dealers in angling apparatus; and if you care to indulge a taste for fads in fishing tackle, there is no lack of opportunity. The tools for fishing need not, however, be elegant, but they must be workmanlike, serviceable, and handy.

In describing the different methods of angling, I shall suggest what sort of tackle to use. In this chapter I will point out the chief articles of an all-round fisherman's paraphernalia.

The first and most indispensable implement is your rod. I cannot recommend the "general rod" as a very useful invention, though something may be said for its portability, if you do not want to encumber yourself with much tackle. But there is no rod that can be converted from a pike rod into a dry-fly-fishing rod; nor will the

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substitution of one top joint for another transform a good pike-fishing rod into an excellent roach rod. Therefore, if you wish to possess the best instruments for trout and coarse fishing, you will certainly require more than one rod.

For trout and grayling, and almost every kind of fly-fishing except for salmon, you may find one rod sufficient, though you will be much better provided if you obtain a couple. Sooner or later, you will probably need a fly-rod that can be used for dry-fly work, and such an implement, if properly constructed, will be suitable for wet-fly fishing. Select a greenheart or split cane fly-rod of ten-and-a-half feet in length, and see that it is not over whippy and "soft," or it will fail you in dry-fly fishing. A rod that will serve you well for both kinds of fly-fishing, *i.e.*,

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wet and dry, may be made in two or three joints. Most of our experts prefer a two-jointed rod, for it is well to have as few ferrules as possible.

There is no need here to enter the lists between the upholders of greenheart and the devotees of split cane. The right sort of rod is that which you can use with ease and comfort, and it may be made from either wood or spliced cane. There is a brittle character in greenheart and hickory which occasionally causes a breakage under a sudden jerk or a heavy strain; but this risk can be almost avoided by submitting your rod to the process of steel ribbing. A top joint properly laced with fine steel wire is rendered almost unbreakable under fair usage.

Split cane of good quality is capable of almost any strain that it is likely to

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encounter in the ordinary way of fishing, and it is lighter than greenheart.

A spliced cane rod of this kind is more costly than one made of greenheart, but it will wear well for many years, and may prove the more economical in the longrun. Cheap cane rods can be purchased; they are, however, sloppy and roughly finished, and apt to warp after a few months' use.

I know one clever dry-fly fisher who buys a cheap American spliced cane rod every two or three years, and finds that such a tool can be used with fair success for a time. But I think that a split cane fly-rod turned out by an English firm is the cheaper article in the end.

A combination dry and wet-fly rod, made either in split cane or greenheart, has been constructed to my specification

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by Messrs Westley, Richards & Company, at their Birmingham branch. It can be obtained in three qualities, and at different prices, and from constant use of the split cane rod for sea trout, brown trout, grayling and chub, as well as dry-fly-fishing, I am able to say that it is a thoroughly reliable weapon.

A ten or eleven feet fly-rod may be made to serve for all ordinary kinds of trout fishing. It is, however, advisable to have another rod, which can be employed for sea-trout fishing on big rivers, for taking heavy loch trout, for dapping, and for fishing the worm in clear water. This rod may be twelve feet long, but if you possess a shorter one already, let it measure fourteen feet. A rod of this length is used with two hands, and with its aid you can cast a long line on

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wide rivers, and hold a salmon of fifteen pounds, or even a heavier fish. It is also useful for casting the worm in the far-off method, but for this purpose it must be fairly limber as well as long.

The next thing is to select a reel for trout fishing. One reel *may* prove enough, but you will not regret the purchase of two. A reel for the bigger rod should hold sixty to eighty yards of line, and it should have a check, and not too much weight. Brass, gun metal, ebonite, aluminium, and wood are used in the manufacture of reels. Sound gun metal is perhaps the best and most durable material. Ebonite is lighter, but it is breakable. Your smaller reel ought to hold about forty yards of finer line, suitable for fish up to three pounds in weight. But very slender lines, if they are made

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of the proper stuff, will be strong enough for much heavier fish.

Dressed silk lines for trout fishing are made in numerous qualities, and may be bought in lengths of from twenty-five to a hundred yards or more. Many fishermen use about thirty yards of dressed line, and make up the rest of the length with a cheaper line, or "backing," of undressed silk. The backing is spliced to the dressed line in the following manner:— About an inch of the back line is untwisted, and the dressing is scraped from an inch of the oiled line, the two ends are then twisted together with cobbler's wax, and whipped with waxed silk. The whipping must be secure, and not too thick, or the line will not pass freely through the rings of the rod.

Fly-fishing lines are made "level," that

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is, the same thickness throughout, or they are tapered at one end. A tapered line assists in neat casting when fishing with the dry fly, and makes less disturbance of the water than a level line; but some fishermen prefer a heavier, level line, even for the finest fishing with the floating fly, because a light, finely tapered line is difficult to get out against the wind, and is not so handy for long casts. Some dressed lines are made with the taper at both ends, so that when one tapered part is worn with frequent use, the other end may be substituted by reversing the line on the reel.

You will need gut casts of various degrees of strength and fineness. Gut should be free from roughness, and of equal thickness in each strand or length. The fewer knots or joins in your cast the

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better for casting, and for strength. On several pages of this handbook you will find instructions as to the selection of gut casts and traces for different kinds of fishing.

A landing-net is an indispensable adjunct to the paraphernalia of the trout fisherman, except under certain conditions. When the trout are over a quarter-of-a-pound in weight, it is safer to net than to lift them from the water, and when wading, it is often difficult to secure a fish without using the landing-net. Still, the net is often a serious encumbrance, and there are anglers in the North who never carry one. Many fish, especially sea trout, are lost by fishermen who discard the landing-net, and, as a lost fish is always a source of vexation, it seems somewhat foolish to refuse to carry a net. But the landing-net

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is one of the fly angler's trials, especially when using a double-handed sea trout rod, or when both hands are constantly required.

A long-handled net is useful in steadying oneself when wading in strong streams, and it is better for quick netting than a short-handled net, as the reach gives the fisherman a distinct advantage. On the other hand, it is in the way when you wish to spin the minnow, or to employ the left hand for any purpose, and you will often wish that you had left it at home. Yet, if you go fishing without a net, you are nearly certain to lose good fish in trying to handle them or to draw them ashore. So, all things considered, it is well to carry a landing-net, unless you are going in pursuit of small burn trout, which can be stranded or lifted.

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I do not know of anything better, on the whole, in the way of nets than one of hard, tanned cord, or oil-dressed cord, attached to a plain, straight handle. For rough wading the handle may reach to the shoulder, and be provided at the bottom with an iron spike and a hook, which will be often useful for detaching the cast from an overhanging bough. Undoubtedly such a net is cumbersome, but it has its specific virtues. A shorter-handled landing-net can be carried on a ring attached to the creel, or thrust into the top of one of your wading stockings, but both plans have their drawbacks.

There are beautifully finished nets that fold up when not in use, and fly out when you wish to net a fish. Some are worked by a spring, and others are telescopic. The device is ingenious, and the imple-

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ment is excellent, so long as it does its work at the crucial moment. Unfortunately, these nets often fail you by jamming, or by other kinds of refractory behaviour, when an exceptionally big trout is almost within your grasp. For this reason I use the old-fashioned, straightforward, plain landing-net.

A selection of artificial flies, suitable for use at different seasons of the year and in various waters, is an important part of your outfit. Flies on eyed hooks are now used widely, and they will ultimately supersede the flies mounted on more or less unreliable gut. I like the old fly-book with its parchment leaves and compartments, and its numerous pockets for casts and traces, and odds and ends, and I always carry it with me. Eyed flies cannot be carried in a book;

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they must be stuck on cork in a box, and to handle the smaller ones, you require a pair of small tweezers.

India-rubber wading trousers or stockings should be of the first quality, as they will prove the cheapest in the longrun. Wading brogues are made of canvas or leather, and sometimes of rubber throughout. If you live near a rocky river, and fish almost daily in the season, you will soon wear out a pair of canvas brogues, and you may discover that the nails are constantly disappearing from the soles. In this case try a pair of wooden clogs. They are very cheap and durable, and the metal rim to the soles is a safeguard against slipping on the smoothest rocks.

A creel is better than a bag for carrying your fish. See that the shoulder-strap is broad, for the basket often bears heavily

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at the end of a long day. Dry the inside of the creel after use, and now and then give it a scrub out with hot water, in which a few grains of permanganate of potash may be dissolved.

COARSE FISHING TACKLE

More detailed description of several kinds of tackle will be found in subsequent chapters, but I will here refer to the chief articles of the coarse fisherman's kit. Two rods, at least, are necessary; one for pike fishing and heavy legering, and the other for roach, perch, and bottom fishing generally. If you wish to specialise in roach fishing, you will also require a bamboo roach-pole. Very serviceable and inexpensive pike rods, made of cane and greenheart, can be

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bought from most tackle-dealers. As a rule these rods are rather too stiff for spinning from the reel, but they can be made to answer for both spinning and live baiting.

For general bottom fishing, a mottled cane rod, with a greenheart top, about twelve feet in length will be found useful. All rods should have snake rings fitted to them, and proper adjustable reel fittings. There is no need to provide yourself with a heavy, clumsy weapon as your second rod, for, generally speaking, it will not be required for big fish.

A couple of well-made Nottingham reels will be necessary. They may both be fitted with optional checks. The larger reel should hold about eighty or a hundred yards of pike line, and the smaller one forty yards of fine, but sound,

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silk line. There is no need to use thick lines if the material is good.

A few long swan or porcupine quill floats, and one or two of cork for heavy streams, will be requisite, and a big cork float for live-bait fishing. Your hooks should range from gudgeon size to barbel, and you must be sure that the gut is not too coarse, and yet strong and reliable.

Split shot of various sizes, drilled bullets, float caps, a plummet, a disgorger, a good knife and pair of small scissors, a pair of shot pliers, a piece of cobbler's wax, some binding silk, and some deer or mutton fat for greasing your line should be carried in your creel or bag whenever you go fishing.

A fairly big landing-net should be carried, but for heavy pike a gaff is handier and more portable. If you buy a pike net, it will serve also as a landing-

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net for salmon on rivers where the use of the gaff is forbidden. Landing-net rings of metal, constructed with folding joints, are convenient to carry to and from the water. The net will last much longer if it is first well dressed with boiled linseed oil, and always dried as quickly as possible after a day's fishing.

Your stock of gut traces and casts for coarse-fishing must include "bottoms" of at least three strengths. The thickest may be "medium salmon," the next "fine," and the third "fine-drawn," or the finest natural. In bright weather and in clear water, you must use fine gut for several kinds of coarse fish. Extra stout gut is now almost out of date among pike fishermen, and is almost useless in much-fished waters, where pike are wary through education.

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A pair of handsewn shooting boots, provided with hobnails, should be worn by the waterside. They may be dressed with castor oil, within and without, and so rendered impervious to water. Soak the soles well in the oil, after standing the boots for half an hour in tepid water. From time to time rub in soft dubbin all over, and the boots will remain waterproof until they wear out. Gaiters are almost indispensable for winter fishing, and you will need warm underclothing and a good mackintosh.

Some hints upon the care of your tackle will be in place here. First of all, treat your rod as though you loved it. Don't drag it about by the top joint, and avoid any other rough usage likely to cause the warping of a joint. Once a year attend to the whippings of the rings and give an

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even coat of hard varnish. To prevent joints from sticking in damp weather, apply a little grease before using the rod. When fishing rods are idle, they should be kept in a dry room, lightly tied up in their cases and suspended from a hook by the finer ends of the joints.

After fishing always unwind the wet part of your line, and coil it upon a newspaper laid on the floor, so that it may thoroughly dry. Dressed lines, and undressed also, should have an occasional rubbing with a rag smeared with vaseline. Gut must be kept from the light and air between parchment or chamois leather. Reels require periodic inspection and oiling.

In the winter, wading-stockings should be placed in a fairly warm corner, and folded lightly. Stuff your brogues with

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hay to preserve their shape while out of use. Attention to tackle during the times that it is laid aside will prolong its service, and save you much worry by the waterside. Therefore, at the end of the off season thoroughly overhaul rods, reels, lines, casts, and hooks, and make sure that everything is sound and in working order. If last year's gut is rotten, throw it away and buy fresh casts. It is false economy to use brittle gut.

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II

THE PRINCIPLES OF FLY-FISHING

FISHING with the artificial fly is the highest form of angling and, to my mind, the most interesting branch of the sport.

Fly-fishing is an ancient diversion, and there is evidence that it was known among the Greeks. We have no records of this pastime in England until about the fifteenth century; but there is little doubt that the fly was used by fishermen before the time of Dame Juliana Berners, who, in her "Treatyse," wrote a list of "flyes" for six months in the year. Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton gave the world a classic work upon fishing, in which there are universal and stable rules

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for the successful handling of the fly-rod; and since their day the literature of fly-fishing has been increased by some hundreds of volumes.

Why do so few bottom fishermen endeavour to learn this art of fishing with an artificial fly? I suppose that anglers for coarse fish will reply that, having no opportunity for trying their skill with game fish, they do not think it worth their while to master fly-fishing. But dace, chub, roach, rudd, perch, and sometimes pike, can be lured with the fly, and under certain conditions, and in some waters, this lure is more enticing to four of the fish in this list than any baits or attractive object which may be offered to them. Dace rise to the artificial fly wherever they are found. Chub of the heaviest weight can be captured

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with a sunk or floating dun or buzz-fly, rudd give good sport on the fly-rod, and roach are often in the mood for surface food. The perch of many ponds and reservoirs eagerly seize on a sunk tinselled fly, and pike, lurking in shallow water and among weeds, frequently rush at a gaudy arrangement of feathers and tinsel even after refusing a live bait.

Why, then, do so many Thames, Trent and Ouse fishermen neglect this pleasing method of taking fish? I have seen bank anglers patiently baiting swims, and catching a brace of roach or dace in the hour, while I have been capturing fish from the same length of the river at almost every other cast of the fly. Yet these fishermen were keen enough to spend long days at their baited places and to tramp miles to the river for the sake of

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the sport. But this rigid faith in bait and bait always is already growing lax; and in a few years we shall see many more anglers for dace and chub with the fly-rod as an occasional substitute for the roach pole.

Without decrying the interesting recreation of bottom fishing—which is one of my own hobbies as well as fly-fishing—I will begin these practical counsels for the fisherman with some instruction in the use of the artificial fly for coarse fish.

Let us suppose that the pupil is entirely without experience, and that he is on the riverside one evening in July about an hour before sunset. First let him observe that the dace and a fair number of roach have left their feeding haunts on the bed of the river, and are now lying in wait for flies that appear about this hour of the

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evening. The rings on the water will show the observer that the fish are taking flies; and now and then he will not only have visual evidence of this fact, but he will hear the plop of a hungry half-pound dace as it dashes at a floating insect.

Being provided with a ten or eleven feet fly-rod, a reel, a dressed line, a fine gut cast and three small flies attached thereto, the beginner is ready for his first essay in fly-fishing. Unless he has bought a "made-up cast"—that is one with the flies already in position—he will be puzzled to know the correct method of attaching his flies. The casts of general use are three yards long, with a loop at either end. Snip off the bottom loop, and soak the end of the gut by holding it in the mouth for about five minutes. You cannot safely tie unsoaked gut. When

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dry it is brittle, but when wet it is pliable and tough. You must therefore steep any ends that you wish to join; so at the same time soak the gut attached to the fly and hook. Of course if you are using eyed flies, there is only one end of gut to soak.

There are two ordinary modes of fastening lengths of gut, *i.e.*, with the single or the double fisherman's knot; the double knot is the stronger, the single is less visible, but it is apt to pull. Lay about two inches of each end together. Take one end and coil it twice round the other, then pass through the double loops and pull tight. Now proceed in the same fashion with the other end, and finally hold each strand of gut, draw the knots together, and cause them to merge. A careful inspec-

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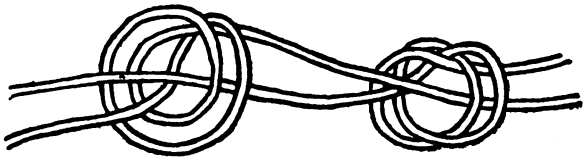
tion of the diagram will assist you in following these directions. Having drawn the knots close, neatly snip off the loose ends with your pocket scissors.

You have now attached your point, or tail, fly. The next thing is to fix



DOUBLE KNOT FOR JOINING GUT I

on the droppers, or, as some call them, "the bob flies." Your flies should be attached about two feet apart, and the gut to each fly need not be longer than your little finger. The easiest way of attaching the droppers is with a simple loop, such as you will find at either end of your cast. Find a joint knot in the

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cast and place the loop against the cast above this knot. Push the fly through the loop, draw the gut through, and tighten on the cast. This is easy but clumsy. The method has this advantage, that you can easily remove your fly when you wish to place another in its stead. Still, the double gut above the fly, which is unavoidable when this plan is employed, is more palpable than it need be, and when fish are cunning, it is important that you use every precaution for their deception.

In heavy or coloured waters and in streams where fish are not "gut shy" and highly enlightened, I sometimes use the loop for fixing the droppers to the cast. Another and neater method is to affix the fly to the cast by passing the gut of the dropper between the two strands

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before tightening up the two double loops, having first tied a single knot in the dropper gut to prevent slipping. To make the hold secure, you must draw the two knots very tightly together. Here is a third plan, and one that is safe and easy. Begin as in joining two pieces of gut by laying the dropper gut against the cast close to a joint knot, then tie a single knot above the knot and another single knot below it, and pull tight. This will prevent the dropper gut from slipping up and down the cast, which it will be sure to do if you only fasten it above the joint knot. Of course, these preparations should be made before you reach the river, and it is an excellent plan to carry three or four casts already made up with flies. Your casts must always be soaked before use or a break-

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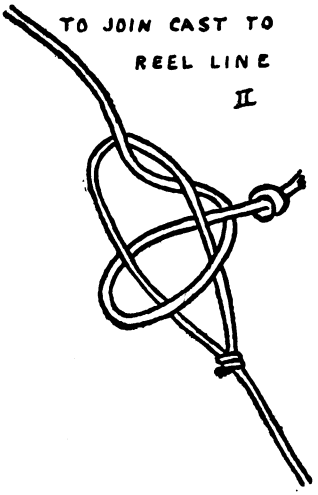
age will result. Damping boxes for casts can be bought; but if you soak a couple of casts for half-an-hour before starting



for the river, they all remain damp if placed in an india-rubber pouch.

Upon reaching the river you will find that your cast has a tendency to coil when it is attached to the reel line. You can straighten it by drawing a piece of

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india-rubber briskly up and down the gut. Some fishermen can straighten a cast by merely dragging it a few times between the finger and thumb.

To fasten the cast to the reel line, you can use the knot illustrated on the preceding page, or tie it as follows. Make a knot at the extreme end of the reel line, and simply fix the line to the loop of the cast with a single knot. This is the firmest knot you can tie, and it is quickly done. But it is not so easily undone, though eight times out of ten you will not find it very difficult to loosen it after fishing, and as I have found that the jam knot is just as likely to stick, I often adopt this somewhat heterodox method of fastening my cast to the line.

Your initial lessons in fly-fishing will probably cause you some vexation. I

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advise you, if possible, to begin to throw the fly over coarse fish, such as dace, bleak, and chub, till you are sufficiently experienced to try your cunning upon the warier trout and the more sophisticated grayling. Dace are sufficiently shy and fastidious to afford you opportunities for the display of patience. They have their whims and fancies and do not dart recklessly at the wrong fly, or at one which is clumsily offered to them. In clear low water you must stalk dace as you would stalk trout, and it is necessary to use fine tackle and the right sort of fly.

The cardinal rules in fly-fishing practice are: (1) Always keep as much out of sight of your fish as possible. If necessary, crawl and kneel, and do not let your shadow fall upon the water while moving along the bank. When the sun is behind

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you, remember that your shadow is gigantic; therefore, stand well back from the water. Always make use of the shelter of boughs and reeds in stalking fish. (2) Whenever possible cast up the stream. This injunction is laid down with emphasis by almost every angling counsellor, and it is a good general rule. Nevertheless, you cannot *always* fish up stream, as any experienced fisherman knows well enough. There may be five or six hindrances to casting above a rising fish. Trees may prevent an up-stream cast, the water may flow too swiftly for anything but a lightning cast against the stream; the wind may be so strong as to blow your flies back in your face, and other matters may hinder you from observing this excellent rule. Therefore, upon occasion, you are quite

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justified in getting your flies over the fish by any available means.

But if circumstances force you to fish down to a fish instead of up to it, you must throw a long line, stand well out of the fish's observation, and prevent your flies from the fatal drag against the stream which is so deeply resented by most self-respecting trout. When forced to fish down the stream, throw straight out as you stand facing the river, and let the flies float down with the current in a natural manner. Don't check them or jerk the rod, let them go with the stream until they work in towards the bank, and then twitch them out before they drag, and make another cast.

The advantages of fishing up stream are several. As fish lie with their heads against the flow it is obvious that if you

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approach them from the rear your reflection is not so readily visible as when you advance towards their heads. Again, a fly thrown lightly just above a fish or to either side of his head, is more deceptive than one that comes sailing down sedately from the cast down stream, for it is manifest that the fish usually sees the whole length of the cast as it travels towards him in the water. With the short cast up water your cast is less exposed to the view of a rising fish, to say nothing of the lessened chance of disturbing him by your shadow. Moreover, it is easier to hook a fish when you cast for him up the stream, as you pull against and not from him at the strike, while you have also the benefit of a shorter line, which makes striking more certain.

It is not unsportsmanlike to fish down

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stream if conditions tend to render up-stream casting extremely difficult or unprofitable. The true angler uses discretion in this matter, and is not likely to obey an injunction from mere sentiment. If a fisherman invariably complied with the interdiction against casting with the stream, I can only say that in certain lengths of rivers and upon some stormy days, he would have to abstain from fishing altogether with the fly.

(3) Learn to cast so that the flies will drop gently upon the surface of the water. Some disturbance of the surface with your reel line is inevitable, say what you will; but you need not use your line like the lash of a gig-whip. The point to observe is that the cast should not make a splash through its whole length, but fall like thistle-down, or like nothing at all, upon

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the water. This applies to either dry or wet fly-fishing, especially to the former system. In fishing the wet-fly allow the tail fly and the next or dropper fly to sink just below the surface, and keep the top-fly bobbing along the water like a live insect. If you work your "bob-fly" properly you will find that it is highly interesting to fish.

(4) Choose suitable flies. And now we come to an important consideration and a very vexed question. What is the right fly? Generally speaking the most alluring fly is one that as nearly as possible resembles the real insect upon which the fish are feeding at any given time. But this is not an iron rule. For instance, during a big hatch of any fly that may be mentioned, say the March, brown or May fly, the very abundance of

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these particular flies may be in the angler's disfavour. During a glut of May flies trout are often indifferent to the artificial May fly, and when midges swarm they will refuse fly after fly and obstinately feast upon these tiny black specks. Under these conditions who shall say that such or such a pattern of artificial fly is the proper one to offer the fish?

Let the hatch be a moderate one, say of blue duns or redspinners, and you will have sport if you use an artificial fly of either pattern. If fish are rising sluggishly, or not at all, you must try them with one after another of the counterfeits in your collection, in the hope of tickling their fancy. Sometimes an impossible-looking fly will tempt a trout or two on unpropitious days. Occasionally no fly will be discovered

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that can entice them. But with this subject I will deal more explicitly in the chapter upon trout fishing.

We must now return to our novice upon the riverside at sundown. Let him draw out from the reel so much line that the length of line and the cast shall measure a little more than two rods' length in all. This is quite long enough for a beginning. Holding the rod comfortably above the reel he should try to get the line straight out behind him before he casts it upon the water. His arm may ache before he can throw a fairly straight and light line; but the knack will come, and sometimes it comes almost suddenly after considerable vexation of spirit.

The beginner need not feel discouraged if even bleak and dace appear

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uninterested in his earlier efforts to entice them. Everything depends upon care, delicacy and judgment, and these qualities are not acquired in half-an-hour. I wish in this chapter to lay down the main or general principles of fishing with the fly-rod. In other chapters I shall enlarge upon particulars and details.

Begin fly-fishing with a shortish line. Resolve to throw lightly, and to keep the line straight out on the water. By degrees, throw a longer line and practise aiming at imaginary objects in the water, if you fail to observe any rising fish.

DRY-FLY-FISHING

Through the trials and the triumphs of wet fly-fishing we reach the ultimate art of fishing with the floating fly. The

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progress is long or rapid according to the natural aptitude of the learner. Some wet fly-fishers quickly develop into good dry-fly hands, and some anglers begin to fish the fly in the dry style. As I have a wide field to cover in this book, I cannot devote many pages to a dissertation upon the joys of dry-fishing. I can, however, give such practical hints as I am able to set down from my own experience in the use of the dry-fly for trout, grayling, chub, rudd and dace.

The fly-fisherman who has graduated in fly-fishing with the wet-fly usually finds, sooner or later, that the dry-fly method is essential if he wishes to catch trout from the rivers of the South of England, the streams of the Welsh Border Counties, those of the Midlands, and indeed from any clear river in any part

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of the United Kingdom during hot and bright weather. A well-dressed floating fly, skilfully presented to rising trout, is more attractive during the summer months than the sunk fly, always provided that the river is not too swift for dry-fly-fishing, and that the water is not deeply discoloured after heavy rains. I do not deny that there are rivers whereon it is almost impossible to use a floating fly with success, and that there are times when a sunk fly is more deadly than one floating on the surface. But I maintain that the dry-fly, properly handled, is the best of lures for the trout of pellucid rivers, and for educated fish, at most times from the end of April till the close of the season in September.

One fly only, and at the point of the cast, is employed in this style of fishing.

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The cast should taper from the top down to the fly, and its thicker end should be about the thickness of the reel line for a strand or two. A length or two of fine-drawn gut, or of the very slenderest "natural" gut, should form the extremity of a dry-fly cast if you wish to get upon terms with the wily trout of clear and shallow streams. The line may be tapered, but this is a point upon which anglers differ. Certainly, a fairly heavy line is an advantage in fishing with a dry-fly. It is perhaps an aid if the reel line is greased, to make it float; but I think that the gut should always be allowed to sink.

Your procedure is as follows:—Anoint the body, wings, and tackle of your fly with paraffin, upon a little brush, which can be obtained for this purpose. Do not

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drench the fly, but give a touch of the oil here and there on every part, and renew the dressing once or twice during the day, if the fly refuses to float. Flies may be dipped in paraffin several hours before fishing, and allowed to dry slowly in the sun. A fly treated in this manner will not require another oiling for some time.

You must offer your fly to any fish that is breaking the surface of the water; and in a short time you will find that your eyes are becoming very alert to detect these rises. This is called "fishing the rise," and in pursuing this method, you usually refrain from casting until you note the rings caused by a feeding trout.

If there is no rise—and this is often the case—you may range carefully with your eyes directed on the water, and look for "standing" fish, *i.e.*, trout lying near the

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surface, on the watch for a floating insect. In the last resort, when there are no rises visible, and no fish to be seen, you may let your fly alight on the water in likely places on the chance of interesting a trout or two.

The fly must be offered in a delicate manner, especially to the highly fastidious trout of rivers that produce a plentiful store of insects. You need to exercise the most cautious judgment in making your aim, and to avoid exposing the fly for an undue length of time to the wary gaze of a standing fish. The artificial fly that comes sailing down suddenly in company with one or two natural flies which it resembles, is the fly that is likely to deceive a trout. But it must float well, the wings should stand up naturally, and, most important of all, *the cast must not*

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cause the slightest drag upon the water. The drag must at all times be avoided, for it is fatal to success.

Approach as near as you dare to any trout that you mark as your prey. With a moderately short cast, you can work the fly naturally, and you stand a better chance of hitting your fish at the strike. It is not necessary to drop your fly directly over the nose of a trout, but I do not advise casting too far above him. A floating fly placed deftly to the right or left of a fish, in his line of vision, is frequently more deceptive than one that floats slowly down to him, as the fish has a sudden glimpse of the fly without espying a yard or so of the cast.

In the initial stage of dry-fly-fishing it is well to cast with a rather short line, up, or across the stream. Sometimes you

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cannot stalk a fish from below; you are compelled to cast across in order to reach him. Never allow the trout to become aware of your presence by throwing your reflection on the water, flourishing your arms, splashing while wading, or doing any of the score of things that so readily scare intelligent fish. Study to make yourself as small, unobtrusive, and invisible as possible.

After each cast, dry your fly by making a few false casts in the air; but take care that you do not pop off your fly in the process. You will often disgust and put down trout if your fly sinks just in front of them, instead of gracefully floating. To avoid this, make a dozen false casts, if necessary, to dry your fly, and when it has been soaked during the process of playing a fish, it may require a fresh touch

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with the oil brush. Pick the line cleanly and quickly off the water after the fly has been refused. If a fish rises without seizing your fly, wait a moment before casting again. A trout will often take a fly after several faint-hearted rises, or obstinate refusals.

Proficiency in fishing the dry-fly requires extensive experience in stalking trout, great delicacy in casting, judgment in striking, and a knowledge of the flies that form the summer diet of the trout of a given stream. This fascinating and artistic method of capturing trout and grayling adds a new zest to the recreation of the fisherman.

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III

GENERALISATIONS UPON BAIT OR BOTTOM FISHING

BEFORE describing the habits and the haunts of those fish usually designated "coarse," in contradistinction to "game" fish, it may be well to generalise upon the subject of angling with bait. The older writers upon fishing as well as the many able instructors of the present day, do not offer apologies for teaching the use of bait in luring fish to the hook. There are, however, certain superfine anglers of a new school, who profess that there is little or no sport in bottom fishing, and that your genuine sportsman is always a fly-fisherman and nothing else.

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I am not lacking in reverence for the fly, as may be inferred from the last chapter. But fly-fishing is not the whole of angling any more than grouse driving is the whole of shooting.

Some of the most "sporting," expert, and intelligent followers of fishing are, through lack of opportunity, or for various reasons, outside of the select coterie of fly-fishers. Trout-fishing is not so accessible as coarse fishing, and it is usually a more costly pastime. Waters that produce trout and grayling do not abound in every quarter of the United Kingdom, and in the vicinity of London, the few trout streams are in private hands and closed to the "people."

The all-round and complete fisherman has as many kinds of fish in his list as

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the all-round gunner has of ground and winged game. To deny him the title of angler is absurd; to belittle his recreation is an admission of ignorance, and to aver that coarse fishing requires a minimum of skill is a falsity. Scientific pike fishing is not a simple matter; the expert roach angler is not a mere boy at fishing; the cunning bream fisher is no casual and careless trifler with a rod and line, and the man who can catch all kinds of fish is obviously an encyclopædic and widely-experienced practitioner of the art of the angle. Let us dispute no further as to the claims of fly and bait, but take what the gods give in the way of pleasant sport, be it either with the salmon rod or the roach pole.

Bait fishing for fresh-water fish may be divided into three principal methods:

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(1) fishing with float tackle; (2) legering with a weighted line; and (3) fishing with the paternoster. Each of these styles have their variants, and besides these there are several modes of bait-fishing for salmon, sea-trout, brown trout and grayling. There are also various methods of spinning with natural and artificial baits.

I will deal first with float fishing, the commonest method of angling for roach, carp, tench, bream and perch. The purpose of a float, let it be made from cork, quill, or any other substance, is to serve as the indicator of the "bite" of a fish, and to suspend the line under water in its proper position. This important adjunct to bottom fishing must be selected with judgment. For instance, a heavy, round-shaped, cork float, painted green

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and scarlet, is a monstrous and useless article for fine fishing, though year after year such floats are offered for sale. When a fairly heavy float is required, as in fishing waters affected by strong tides, or in bream and rudd fishing in the Norfolk Broads, where a weighty float is an aid in making a long cast—it need not be one of the old-fashioned, dumpy kind, gaudily painted, but a quill, encased in a long cork, coloured a sober green, a very dull yellow, or painted a dull black.

A swan-quill, with a touch of red on the tip, to catch the eye among the ripples, is a handy float for roach fishing in deep swims, for the Nottingham style of fishing and for chubbing along the boughs in winter. But it is not the best float for summer roach, carp or tench fishing in two or three feet of clear water,

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as its length renders it too visible to the fish, and its weight of shot causes an ugly disturbance of the swim whenever it is cast. In the finer method of bait-fishing, the float should be as small and unobtrusive as possible, and if the stream is slow and the water bright, there is nothing better than a little porcupine quill four to five inches in length. It is, of course, more difficult to make a long cast with such a float than with a heavy cork, especially when the wind is against the angler. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, a tiny float is necessary when the stream is fine and shallow, and there are occasions when it is advisable to fish without any kind of float. A little piece of thin white tape tied on the cast, a bit of match-stick half an inch long, or a scrap of paper will often answer as a tell-tale

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for bites, when a float would only serve to scare fish from a swim.

The days of coarse, clumsy tackle are gone. Roach and dace of public rivers are growing more cautious year by year, and to cope with their cunning, the complete fisherman must employ due discretion and delicate modes of enticing them to the hook. Never buy a float because it looks pretty. It is not an ornament, but an implement, and the less obvious it is the greater its merit. The astute trout anglers of the Thames do not use a big, painted float when live-baiting for the monsters of the weirpool. They float their live-bait tackle with a common bottle cork, a sober-looking and adequate substitute for a coloured float. To my mind floats are a necessary evil; they disturb the water in falling, and they bob and dance

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in an impudent fashion over the heads of tackle-shy carp and roach.

The gut for coarse fishing is often chosen as though "coarse" fish required coarse tackle. If a fly-fisherman can strike, hold, and play a two-pound trout in a swift, strong stream, on a fine cast, it stands to reason that a roach or dace fisher should be able to kill fish of a pound weight on the same tackle in an ordinary slow river swim. Why, then, do so many bottom fishermen persist in handicapping themselves by the use of gut thick enough to hold a salmon? Roach are shy and suspicious fish. You cannot fish too fine for them.

No doubt when the tight line is used on a roach pole, there is more strain on the gut in playing a fish than when the cast is fastened to a running line. But

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the cleverest and most successful roach fishermen can humour big roach to the net with a fine cast and no running line.

When the reel is used, there is no excuse for the employment of stout gut, as the line gives out from the reel to the rushes of the fish, and the strain is borne not by the gut principally, but by the rod, line, and cast.

In float fishing for barbel, bream and carp, or when the leger is used among big fish, it is necessary to resort to stouter gut. But if good quality gut is selected, it need not be coarse. "Natural gut," which has not been "drawn" to make it fine, is more durable and stronger than drawn gut. It costs more than drawn gut, but it is worth the extra cost. The gut known as "fina," in lengths of from twelve to eighteen inches, is suitable for making

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up casts for ordinary coarse fishing; while for fine fishing in clear water a thinner gut called "refina" may be recommended. The gut sold as "regular" will serve for the bigger coarse fish, and if a stronger cast is required, "padron" may be used. "Marana" is of the necessary strength for pike and very heavy barbel, and is also useful for sea fishing when big conger, pollack, and cod are about.

Gut should be level and smooth, with a hard skin, and in the longest "lengths" which can be obtained. It is not economical to store a quantity of gut from one year's end to another, but to replenish the stock frequently, as gut is apt to rot and weaken. It can be kept in wash leather, secluded from air and light.

The question of hooks demands our attention. Some fishermen prefer a bend

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in the shank of the hook, while others like a straight shank. The "Pennell-Limerick" hooks can be recommended, ranging from the tiny ooo to number 10. They are eyed, and can be attached easily to the cast. The hooks advertised as "crystal roach hooks" are also useful, and they are usually mounted upon fine gut. Hooks should be made from the best steel or they will break, or straighten out from the weight of a big fish. The sneck bend hooks range from oo smallest gudgeon size, to 14, a hook about one and a half inches long, and suitable for worm-fishing for barbel and other strong bottom fish.

The points of hooks must be keen, and when blunt through use, both point and barb should be sharpened with a fine file. Look to your hooks! Many good fish are lost every season through the breakage of

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common hooks made from soft and inferior metal.

The leger tackle is useful in strong, deep streams, and in holes. A leger is a yard of gut selected for the weight of the fish that are expected, with a suitable hook attached to the end. A bored bullet, light or heavy, according to the strength of the stream, is threaded on to the reel line just above the leger, and kept in place by a knot below it, or by a piece of match-stick knotted in the line. The bullet may also be threaded on the gut near the top loop and kept in its place with a shot above and below it. The line runs freely through the hole in the bullet, which lies on the bed of the river, and the gut extends below it, the bait often moving slightly with the fluctuations of the current.

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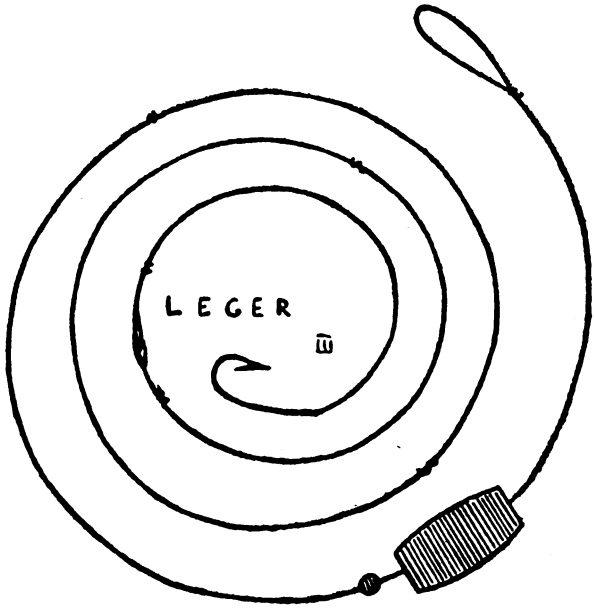
BAIT OR BOTTOM FISHING

This tackle is employed in barbel-fishing; it is also used for the bream and roach of strong waters, and can be



adapted for several kinds of angling by the selection of a light or a heavy bullet, and fine or medium gut, according to conditions and circumstances.

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The paternoster is indispensable to the perch and pike fisher, and can sometimes be used for other fish. A pear-shaped lead is fastened to the end of a yard or a yard and a half of gut, to which from two to three hooks are attached. The bottom hook is so fixed that it is near the bottom of the river; the other hook is about a foot or eighteen inches above it. To make a perch paternoster, procure a yard of "regular" gut, and attach a foot or so of worn-out or thinner gut to the end of it. The ring of the bullet is fastened on the thin gut; the reason for the use of the worn-out gut is to be explained by the obvious fact that if the bullet is jammed among rocks or weeds, the tackle can be freed with only the loss of the bullet, and probably a piece of the thinner gut, whereas if the worn gut is not used, you

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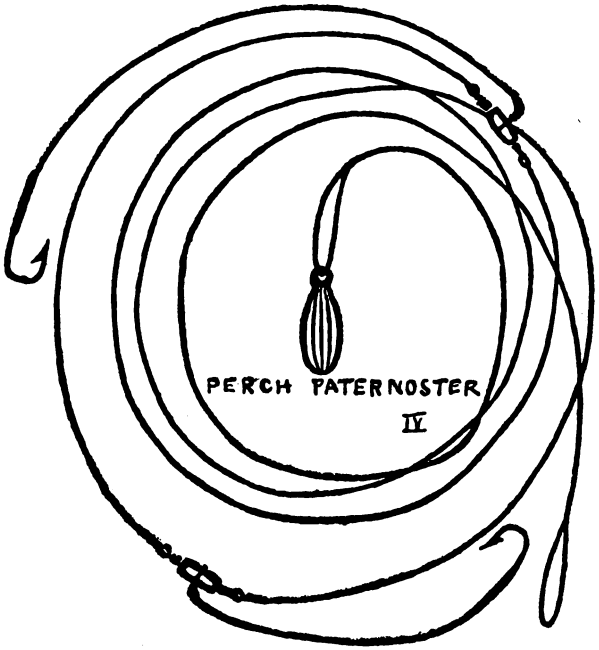
will chance to lose not only the sinker, but a considerable length of the paternoster as well.



The hooks may be fastened on to the gut of the paternoster in one of the methods described in the chapter on Fly-

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Fishing, and the length of gut to the hooks should be three inches. I do not know that much advantage is to be gained from attaching the hooks to swivels but some anglers prefer paternosters made in this way.

The apparatus required for a day's mixed coarse-fishing, excluding pike, consists of a twelve-feet bottom rod, fine and medium casts ready fitted with floats, shot and hooks on winders, a brass or wooden reel, an undressed fine silk line, a landing-net, spare hooks of various sizes, leger bullets, split shot, a small pair of shot-pliers, a disgorger, float-caps, a plummet, well-scoured lob and red worms in a bag or ventilated tin, gentles in sand in a tin, white paste bait in a clean rag, bread crust cubes for roach, and ground-bait of bran bread, or boiled wheat. If perch are

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sought, a can of water containing live minnows and gudgeon should be carried. The bulk of your paraphernalia can be placed in a creel or a stout jean or canvas bag, which will also serve to carry your fish. The green boxes used by London anglers are useful as fishing-tackle cabinets and they can be turned into seats by the waterside, but they are rather too cumbersome and heavy.

A stout creel makes a good seat and it is lighter to carry. But a folded macintosh, or a folding india-rubber seat, is handy enough for general purposes. It is well to lighten your burden as much as possible, especially if you have far to walk to and from the water. Therefore let your tackle be packed compactly, and neatly ordered, so that you can put your hand upon anything with facility. Spare casts and hooks

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can be kept in a small book with parchment leaves and envelopes. Metal cast boxes are sold to hold paternosters and legers ready for use.

Besides the above enumerated articles, every fisherman should carry a good knife with two sharp blades, a small pair of pocket scissors, a piece of binding silk or thread, and a bit of cobbler's wax, in a scrap of leather.

Rivers that contain coarse fish usually produce several species, and it is well to be prepared for more than one style of fishing. With float tackle, legers, and paternosters, you are ready for roach, perch, chub, dace, and bream. Sometimes the fish lie far out in the stream, and this is often the case in fine weather and clear water. Then is the time to try a fine leger well away from the bank. Occasion-

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ally roach are "off feed"; when this is the case, you may entice a few perch with minnows on a paternoster. And sometimes, despite the excellence of your tackle and the exercise of your skill and patience, you may fail to basket a single fish. But these blank days will steadily decrease in number as you gain knowledge and dexterity.

Mr F. G. Aflalo has collected the evidence of upwards of a hundred fishermen of experience concerning the atmospheric conditions which are favourable or otherwise to the capture of fish of various kinds. *Fishermen's Weather* is an interesting book on a very much debated topic. It is difficult to decide from a glance at the barometer, and a look at the weathercock and the sky, whether any particular day will prove favourable to sport. You must fish

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in good faith and take the weather as it comes. There is something in the old saying about the wind in the south blowing the bait into the fish's mouth, but don't accept it as an axiom, for it is not always a warm breeze that bestirs fish to feed. Thames trout have been caught in snowstorms, and during a biting North-easter; and I have known instances of big takes of trout, with the worm, in water tainted with melting snow. Roach sometimes feed during a frost, and sometimes a low temperature seems to paralyse them. Kingsley said that the east wind hungers pike into madness, but so far as my experience goes an easterly wind is the very worst for all kinds of fishing, not excepting pike fishing.

Carp, tench, bream, rudd, and barbel certainly refuse to be tempted to the hook

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in the cold months, and it is safe to say that chub and dace will not rise freely to an artificial fly in the depth of winter. On the other hand, perch are usually hungry at the break up of a frost, and sometimes they bite well when the thermometer is below 32 degrees. Grayling often take bait eagerly in frosty weather, but no one would fish for eels during a frost.

I am afraid that if we wait for manifestations of all the conditions that are supposed to make "the good fishing day," we shall be forced to spend most of our time in waiting rather than in doing. Nevertheless, the influence of weather upon fish is an interesting and mysterious matter, regarding which the last word will never be uttered.

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IV

I.—Game Fish

SALMON AND SEA TROUT

A favourite of the gods is the lucky owner of a length of a salmon and sea trout river. Fortunate in a lesser degree is the angler who, by favour, or through purchase of the privilege, is enabled to cast his flies upon preserved waters wherein these noble fish do swim. Salmon fishing is a luxury, and therefore often beyond the enjoyment of the honest angler with a small share of the world's wealth. Yet, even to-day, when famous salmon rivers are worth many

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sovereigns a yard, there are still fairly good lengths open to the impecunious, which may be proved by a diligent inspection of those useful annuals, *The Fisherman's Diary and Companion*, and *The Sportsman's Guide to the Forests and Rivers of Scotland.*

The salmon is the chief of the great clan *Salmonidæ.* He "is accounted the king of freshwater fish," in the words of Izaak Walton, while all readers of angling literature know him as "the monarch of the river," "the lordly salmon," "the silvery salmon," etc.

Much as I admire the salmon, I am bound to say that he is not so wise as the brown trout, less venturesome than his companion the salmon-trout, and more sulky than other members of his family. He is a hot-tempered, pug-

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nacious fish, a restless explorer of the river, a brave fighter on the hook, and a very delightful object at all times, whether leaping a fall or drawing his last gasp at the feet of his triumphant captor.

Once a year *Salmo Salar* comes into fresh water for the purpose of pairing and breeding. He is replete with high living when he leaves the sea, and during his sojourn in the stream, he fares upon—what? That is the question which naturalists and fishermen have been trying to thresh out for generations. The late C. J. Cornish had one theory, someone else has another, and so on. River keepers, and more or less observant rural folk, tell us sometimes that salmon eat small fish in fresh water, an affirmation somewhat coloured by the

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fact that a salmon will seize upon a gudgeon or dace attached to a spinning flight. A salmon will, upon occasions, pursue a bunch of feathers on a hook, as though he loved it, and at other times turn up his snout at any kind of enticement in the way of bait or artificial fly.

I have not finally determined, to my own satisfaction, the diet of *Salmo Salar* in fresh water. It *may* be microscopic jelly-like insects, or animalculæ, or it may be provender of an even more economical and spare character. Some say that he lives upon that which he has consumed in the sea. I quit the mystery herewith, and state the common fact that salmon in most, but not all of our rivers, can be caught with an artificial fly.

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FLY-FISHING FOR SALMON

This is the favourite, and, I think, in the longrun, the most successful mode of capturing the salmon of our country, while it is the most sportsmanlike form of fishing. It may be heresy, but I am at all events supported in my statement by one of our leading fly-makers and anglers, when I avow that the tying of a salmon fly, in the matter of colour or soberness, and the addition of tinsel, or the lack of it, are not of very grave importance. Of course my ears are alert, as I write, to the chorus of contradiction which I have so often heard in the smoking-room and by the river. Nevertheless, though I still remain open to correction, I think that an immense amount of energy is misdirected upon

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the nice selection and handling of costly materials for salmon flies.

I note that one fly-maker gives the Jock Scott in his list as a popular fly on the Annan and not on the Usk. Well, it may be so. I have fished for salmon in the Usk and never used a Jock Scott; but it would not have surprised me in the least if I had used it and taken a salmon with it. And as for the Annan, where, according to the list, it is said to be one of the best of flies, I can only say that the majority of the "old hands" on that river do not fish with the Jock Scott. It is all an open, a *very* open question, and I don't deny that salmon occasionally appear to exhibit curious preference for flies of a given dressing. But I decline to admit an arbitrary rule concerning "the right

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fly" for any named river in the kingdom.

Of higher importance than the fly is the rod, the reel and the line, to say nothing of the cast. And most important of all is the man who works the fly, let it be a Durham Ranger or a Silver Gray.

A salmon rod is a thing to choose with close attention to its weight, strength and casting capacity. The best of rods for salmon must be tiring to the muscles during a long day's fishing, unless the wielder is in the toughest condition, and accustomed to the exercise. Salmon fishing is a laborious pastime—though none the less highly enjoyable—when the angler wades a strong, deep stream, and throws a long line, with an eighteen or twenty feet greenheart rod, against the wind. The arms and the back soon

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tell the tale of muscular strain during the first few days of salmon fishing.

For this reason select a rod which, so far as possible, combines the right length and strength with no undue weight. Seventeen feet is a good general length for an angler of fair strength. A fourteen-feet rod is too short for most salmon rivers; but it is of course lighter to wield, and a rod of this length can be recommended for ladies. An eighteen or a twenty feet rod gives one immense power in holding a fish, and is good for very long casts on wide rivers; but it is a great tax on the muscles unless used by a Sandow.

The Castle Connell rods, fixed with spliced joints instead of ferrules, are reasonable in cost and very serviceable. Rods of split cane are lighter, and

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generally considered stronger, than those from greenheart; but they are of higher cost than wooden rods.

Cheap salmon reels are a delusion and a snare. You will do ill to spare your shillings when buying a reel; but if economy must be regarded, choose a big, well-made, Nottingham check winch rather than an inexpensive one of brass, gun metal, or ebonite. A Nottingham Silex, with an automatic brake, and a Bickerdyke line guard, if it can be obtained large enough to carry a hundred yards or more of salmon line, will be suitable for salmon fishing.

Hardy's "Perfect" reel is a well-constructed article, light and simple to use. It is somewhat high-priced, but the workmanship is good, and the materials reliable. It is well to buy a salmon reel

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that will stand hard wear, and severe strain on the check, and it should also be a rapid winder.

The line is another part of the salmon fisher's outfit which must be selected with care. Salmon lines are made of dressed silk, tapered, or level throughout, and the usual length is a hundred or one hundred and fifty yards. The whole of the line need not be of dressed silk. Thirty or forty yards of the dressed line should be spliced to eighty yards of tanned flax backing. Of course, a line of this length will require a big reel, and a large reel adds to the weight of the rod. But in salmon fishing, you must be prepared to wield heavy tackle.

Salmon casts can be bought from one shilling upwards. The finest quality and heaviest double casts cost fourteen shil-

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lings; but for ordinary salmon fishing in this country, sound, thick marana gut, at three or four shillings the cast, is strong enough. A twelve, or even a fifteen pound fish may be brought to the gaff on a cheaper cast; but the risk of a breakage is considerable unless the best gut is used. An inferior cast may last for some time; but one day you may hook the salmon of the season, and if he breaks the gut, you will bitterly regret that you were not provided with a reliable cast.

When spinning for very heavy salmon in big and powerful rivers, it is sometimes necessary to use double, and even treble, gut traces. For grilse a lighter cast than the one of ordinary salmon strength are often used.

Salmon take the artificial fly under the

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water, therefore let your fly sink, and keep it moving by quick short jerks of the rod until it comes up to the bank. Cast diligently in every corner of a pool, and in all the eddies where salmon are known to lie, and do not despair of a "pull" till you have tried every part of a pool. On the other hand, unless you have marked a salmon at play, or lying in a pool, do not spend too much time in one place. Give the pool a rest, and try another stand, returning afterwards to the first pool, and so on throughout the length of your water. If no one has disclosed the best casting places, you will have to discover them for yourself, and in this business, if you are inexperienced, you will waste some of your time. A tip to the keeper, or a request for information from a friendly and generous angler, will usually save

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you much trouble in choosing your stands for casting.

When a salmon at length seizes upon your fly, you will not mistake the signal to raise your rod sharply, and drive in the hook. The pull is generally a dead strain; but sometimes a salmon will take the fly quietly without an unmistakable tug at the line. You need not be surprised if the fish behaves in a somewhat sedate fashion for a few seconds after the strike. But, on the other hand, you must be ready for a furious rush, a leap, and that dreaded headshaking which so often loosens the hold of the hook.

If your tackle is sound, and the rod powerful, you may restrain the plunges and rushes of the salmon with considerable severity. My friend, Mr William Wright, of Annan, holds his fish very

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hard, and usually tires a big fish out in ten minutes or less. But then he is a practised salmon fisher, and knows, as if by instinct, just what to do at the right second during a fight with a heavy fish. At the outset of salmon fishing, it is not advisable to employ very vigorous measures with a large salmon, but to hold him firmly, play him from the reel up to the last minute, and, if need be, follow him up and down the stream.

If you hook a salmon downstream, in a strong flow of water, do not immediately drag him hard up water, or he will probably fight free in a few seconds. Having assured yourself that he is well hooked, follow him down, recovering line whenever you can. When he begins to struggle furiously, give him line, but whatever you do, beware of a slack line.

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A tired salmon rolls heavily in the water and turns upon his side. If he is quite beaten, he floats with his belly upwards. When your fish shows signs of exhaustion, wind in steadily. and bring him within reach of the gaff. And now we come to the "psychological moment." It is by no means an easy matter to gaff a salmon yourself. Good anglers can do it; but there are occasions when they reach out the gaff with their hearts in their mouths. Many a vanquished salmon gains liberty at the last moment. He sees his enemy on the bank, or in the boat, and the spectacle alarms him into a final plunge or "kick." Sometimes an apparently conquered salmon rushes away with thirty or fifty yards of line, while the fisherman is nervously gripping the gaff.

In the earlier stages of salmon fishing

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I recommend you to have an attendant, and one experienced in the use of a gaff. There is a sense of triumph in gaffing your fish without assistance, but you must reserve this exultation until such time as you have acquired confidence in yourself, steadiness of nerve, and deftness with the gaff.

SPINNING AND BAIT FISHING FOR SALMON

If salmon obstinately refuse the fly, there is nothing for it but to try a spinning bait. In a big, discoloured river, after a spate, you will have a meagre chance of attracting a salmon to the artificial fly, and then is the time for a spinning bait or the prawn. If the water is extremely turbid, you must wait until it fines down somewhat, for salmon cannot readily see a

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spoon-bait or phantom in a deeply-stained stream.

There are several kinds of artificial baits for spinning. The best is perhaps a large silver or gilt minnow, with triangle hooks attached. This is fastened to a trace of two yards in length, made of stout gut, and fitted with three swivels. If the water is deep and strong, you will require a sinker of lead, which should be attached to the gut about eighteen inches above the bait. The handiest leads are those which can be fastened on to a safety-pin swivel; but if you do not use these, the sinker should be threaded on to a piece of gut about four inches long, and the ends of the gut well whipped with waxed silk on to the trace. This plan prevents the trace from kinking, which it is apt to do when the lead is threaded upon it. There are

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several sorts of leads, which can be adjusted with more or less facility. One is the "spiral," which can be twisted on to the trace, and easily removed.

Spoon-baits are sometimes used for spinning for salmon, and there are numerous specialities advertised by the tackle manufacturers. But among artificial baits there is none better than the heavy, unpainted, Devon minnow.

There are three ways of spinning. The best is "from the reel." It is performed in this manner: wind the line almost up to the top ring of the rod, bring the rod back over the right or left shoulder, and let the bait fly out into the stream by a sweep of the rod. If you use force in casting from the reel, especially one of the free-running kind, your minnow will travel through the air at a great

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speed, and the line will be apt to overrun and foul. But as you are compelled to cast with force, when making long casts, or getting your bait out against a stiff wind, you must learn to control your tackle and prevent fouling of the line. The Malloch and the Silex reels are excellent for spinning, and I know some fishermen who use a big Nottingham wooden reel, without a check. Ordinary check winches are useless for spinning from the reel; your reel must be one of the free-running make, and the line should be of undressed silk. It is, therefore, a good plan to have two reels with you, one with a dressed line for fly-fishing, and the other filled with an undressed line for spinning.

It is not impossible to cast from the reel with a dressed line, but an unprepared

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line is much better, as it runs more freely. Reels are now made which rarely overrun if used properly. Overrunning is apt to occur after the bait has dropped into the water, for the force of the cast causes the reel to spin at a great rate. If you use one of the older kinds of reels, you must check it with finger or thumb of the right hand on the rim, immediately when the minnow strikes the water. Having cast your bait, wind in the line steadily and slowly, giving an occasional jerk of the rod top to cause the minnow to behave in a lively fashion. Do not spin fast, especially in turbid water.

A natural bait, mounted on suitable tackle, is very attractive to salmon. Dace, gudgeon, and small trout are good baits. They can be used on several kinds of hook- ights. The best bait carriers are

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the Archer, the Chapman, and the Crocodile, but there are many others. I will describe the Chapman. Two adjustable fans of metal are attached to a spike which is thrust down the mouth of the bait and into the stomach. The fans are then fixed on either side of the bait's head with two small points. Attached to the ring of the spike are twin triangle-hooks, on gut. One length of the gut is mounted with two hooks, the other with one. The double hooks are fixed into the fish with one hook of each triangle, the bottom triangle being near the tail, the upper one in the shoulder. The single hook, on the other side of the bait, may be fastened in place with one hook, or left free. In weedy waters, it is better to attach it to the fish.

The Pennell spinning flight has neither

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fans nor spike, and is armed with two triangle hooks, a lip hook, and a big single hook at the bottom.

The third method of spinning is called the "Thames style," and this can be practised with an ordinary reel. It answers in boat-fishing, and when the river bank is free from reed and thick grass. The line is unwound by dragging it out in coils from the reel, and allowed to lie on the ground. Then the bait is swung out, and the line flies, unless it meets with obstruction from stalks or grass. You can spin very well in this manner from a Thames punt, but it does not work so well by the side of an overgrown river. The line is recovered by drawing it in with the hand instead of winding it on the reel.

Another plan is known as the "Devon style." This is useful when the stream is

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small, and when you are hampered by bushes and other obstacles in casting from the reel. The line is uncoiled, as in the Thames method, but it is drawn into small coils in the palm of the hand while the bait is spinning. Some anglers can recover the line on the thumb and little finger, but this needs considerable skill and much practice.

The prawn is a deadly bait for salmon in certain rivers, but in some preserves it is forbidden. I am not an advocate of bait fishing for salmon. However, the prawn may be used when everything else in the way of "lures" fails to tempt fish. Tackle for prawn fishing for salmon consists of a small spike within the prawn, and three small triangle hooks without. The bait is usually fastened on to the hooks with fine copper wire or silk, and a

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small sinker is used. When using the prawn, work it slowly up and down in the water, in the sink-and-draw fashion, or spin it like a minnow. It is said to be a good bait in low, clear water.

I have seen big salmon caught from the Usk and other Welsh rivers with the lob-worm. The Usk fishers thread the worm on a big hook, which is encased in a thin bored lead, with only the barb and point projecting. No other weight is necessary. The worm is kept constantly on the move with an up and down motion, in pools and eddies, and in guts where salmon often lie.

SEA-TROUT FISHING

I have not space enough to enlarge upon the joys of fishing for sea-trout, but I may say that if you have once spent a

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week with the sewin of Wales or the sea-trout and herling of the Scotch border rivers, you will proclaim the sport as very entrancing.

Salmon-trout, or sea-trout, are migratory fish which breed in rivers once a year, and spend some of their time annually in the sea and in tidal estuaries. They are even more venturesome than salmon, they have queer temperaments, and they are bold fighters for life when hooked. Sometimes they rise well to the fly; at other times nothing will induce them to rise, and when the river is low and the water bright it is difficult to catch a brace of these fish until sunset or late twilight emboldens them to quit their harbours.

The young sea-trout of the Nith, Annan, and Esk, up to a pound in weight,

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are known as herling. They are the grilse of the salmon-trout, and are very abundant in these rivers during most years from mid-June till the end of the season in October. Herling are less wary than sea-trout, but they are shy and suspicious in low water, and should be fished for with as much care and skill as enlightened brown trout. Small flies and fine casts must be used in the daytime. At night, when these fish frequently take the fly recklessly, a stouter cast and bigger flies may be substituted. Ordinary trout flies are often attractive to sea-trout, but most anglers like a little colour and tinsel in the dressing.

Sea-trout lie in the pools below weirs and falls and off the edges of broken streams. They are not found in the very shallow runs, unless the water is

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discoloured by a flood. On most days a few fish show themselves by leaping, or disclose their whereabouts by breaking the surface of the water, and it should be your concern to watch for these signs. Still, it is no evidence that the sea-trout are not up from the sea if you fail to observe them, for the very pool by which you are standing may be almost lined with fish. Sometimes sea-trout and herling are in a lively mood early in the morning and quite "off feed" at mid-day, while on other days, especially during a run of fish fresh from the sea, they come madly at the flies at any hour.

Fish with three or four flies on your cast and keep the flies moving below the water. As a rule sea-trout fishers cast cross stream, let the flies sink, and work them with jerks until the current has

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carried them to the end of their journey, when the flies should be drawn jerkily up against the stream. The more life you can put into your flies the better your chance of exciting sea-trout to follow them.

Sea-trout of two pounds and over that weight do not rush at the flies with the avidity of the smaller fish of their species. A day's fishing may yield a couple of dozen herling, or finnock, and only one or two sea-trout. I believe that sea-trout are much warier than they were twenty years ago, but upon occasions they still take the fly boldly. At night if the temperature is high and the moon gleams faintly from a dull sky, salmon trout frequently rise eagerly. They are also lively after a spate.

In many rivers the sea-trout run earlier

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in the season than the herlings, and it is during the first run that you stand the best chance of taking a few brace of big fish. When the herling begin their journey up the river, sea-trout have become cautious and cunning, and as a rule they will not take an artificial fly in the daylight. But it is well to remember that the habits of these fish vary in different rivers and from season to season. Occasionally, anglers are perplexed for weeks at a stretch at the apathy of herling and sea-trout, and then comes a spell of luck and the fish "are jumping all over the place." There are times when day fishing with the fly is almost hopeless, and the only course is to wait until darkness sets in, and to fish patiently with the flies well sunk and slowly worked.

In stained water sea-trout and herling

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are easily captured with small red worms or brandlings. Pot-hunting fishermen make heavy catches during this state of the water. As many as a hundred herling were caught by one rod, in a day, from a Dumfriesshire river during a flood.

Worm-fishing for these fish in clear low water is a different matter. It requires skill, fine tackle and careful approach to the haunts of herling. Three or four shot are pinched on the cast about a foot above the hook, to sink the worm and to check it in sharp streams. The cast must be fine and the hook a single one, baited with a lively red worm. Wading and casting the worm with a single-handed rod is good sport in fine weather when the fish are not interested in the fly. Cast your worm into the top of a run, just

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off the broken water, and let it go down with the stream. Move from one stand to another until you discover a shoal of herling, when, if they are fresh-run, you may be sure of taking at least a few brace.

When the water is fining from a spate, a three-inch silver or gilt minnow may be tried in the pools, eddies, and slower streams. Sometimes heavy baskets of herling are obtained by spinning. But the spinning bait will not account for many fish in clear water during hot weather.

There is nothing better for sea-trout fishing than a light twelve or fourteen feet rod, though some fishermen use a long salmon rod. A ten-feet trout split-cane rod is powerful enough to kill sea-trout up to four or five pounds in weight, and is lighter to wield. I do not care to fish

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for small sea-trout with a double-handed rod, stout enough to kill a twenty-pound salmon. On the other hand, you will often wish that you had a longer rod and a heavier line, when fishing in big rivers, for it is very annoying to find that you cannot cast over fish that are moving by the opposite bank of the river. So, all things considered, the rod should be at least twelve feet long, and of good casting power.

Sea-trout fight more valiantly than brown trout. There are no better fighters among fish, and as their mouths are tender, the hook often gives from its hold while the fish is being played to the net. You must not be too severe with sea-trout. Try to play them out of strong water as quickly as possible, and draw them downstream. If they rush up-

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stream give them line, but avoid slackening your hold on them. Be ready for a dash into midstream when you think the fish is beaten and the net is in your hand.

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V

II.—Game Fish

BROWN TROUT AND GRAYLING

Although the assiduity and patience displayed by beginners in trout-fishing on such rivers as the Darenth, the Dove, and the Lamborne is very admirable, I think the novice is well advised if he learns his first lessons on the banks of a tumbling brook in Yorkshire or Devon, or by a peaty Scotch burn, wherein the troutlets are not overwise and coy. If there is no alternative, go boldly at it, and begin to acquire your rudimentary knowledge on one of the clear Southern streams; but should you have the oppor-

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tunity, and the choice, go north or west for your first trout-fishing expedition.

I have already given you some instruction in fly-fishing, though I know well enough that theory and practice are two different matters. A few more hints may be of service, but experience and habit must teach you the rest, and fit you for a qualification as a fly-fisher of parts.

You should, first of all, cultivate the habit of close observation whenever you are by the waterside, so that you may become acquainted with the traits and the moods of trout, and gain knowledge of their haunts and feeding-places. From October to February trout are engaged in spawning, and at the end of this period they are hungry, lean, and out of condition. During their recovery from the reproductive process, trout begin

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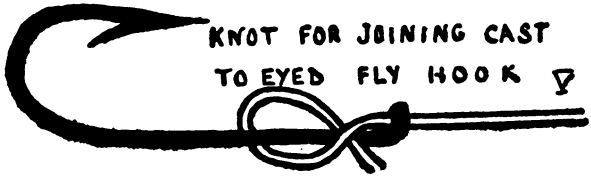
to rise eagerly to the flies that appear over the water at this time of the year; and by April they are regaining their strength and the lustre of their golden scales. In September they prepare for spawning and begin to exhibit indifference towards surface food.



The first spring fly to appear in large numbers is the blue dun, an insect that undergoes two or three modifications in size and colour in the imago or final state. This fly is abundant or otherwise according to the locality and the conditions of weather that attend its development from the ovum to the full stage. It is, at any-rate, a general fly for all rivers in this

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country during the spring months, and you cannot err if you use it from April till the end of May.

Another early fly is the March brown, which, however, is seldom abundant until April, and is often, in cold seasons, almost scarce. But when March browns are hatching out during an April noon, by all means have their imitation as the tail fly on your cast.

With the waning of April, the dark olive dun often comes on the water, and this is a very useful stock fly throughout the season. It is also a good grayling fly in mid-winter. The iron blue dun makes its appearance on dull, cool days, in the spring and early summer. When in doubt, on an unpromising day at the beginning of the season, I have often found the iron blue dun the only killing

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fly in my book. The redspinner, the ash dun, the yellow dun, the alder, the red quill gnat, the blue upright, and the whirling dun are all useful and popular flies, but some of these are not found in the natural state on all our rivers. The May fly, or green drake appears early in June, and is taken greedily by trout for about ten to fourteen days. During the May fly season, when the fish are really voracious, the most inexperienced of fly-fishermen can scarcely fail to catch a few trout.

For wet-fly-fishing in moorland streams it is best to use hackle flies, *i.e.*, those dressed without wings. It is probable that trout mistake a sunk fly of this description for the pupæ that rise from the bed of the river, when the fly is on the point of hatching. It may, however, prove profit-

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able to fish with winged flies, in the wet style, in big, boisterous rivers and in discoloured water. But, as a general rule, the hackle flies are the best in early spring, especially in clear streams.

Flies for "dry" work should be carefully dressed to resemble the natural insect. The wings must cock or stand up in a life-like manner, and the hackles and tail must be equally deceptive. Except in abnormal seasons, May is early enough to begin dry fly-fishing.

Hill brook trout are far less fastidious in the matter of flies than the trout of the bigger river, and the pellucid streams of the North Midlands, Hampshire and Hertfordshire. Sometimes the weirdest-looking fly, bearing no resemblance to any living insect, is seized with avidity by the small, hungry trout of a Scotch

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burn or a Welsh tributary. I have proved this again and again, not only in the rivulets of this country, but in Spain and Belgium. On the other hand, it is usually a waste of time to fish with "a fancy fly" of this order in rivers where the trout are too educated and dignified to heed any lure that does not closely resemble the real insects to which they are accustomed.

You cannot fish "too fine" for trout, especially in bright weather. I have already counselled you upon this important matter, and advised you to acquire the art of rendering yourself as invisible as possible. Always try to fish with the sun in front of, and not behind your form. Avoid all unnecessary flourishing of the arms and the rod, and make use of any available

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cover when stalking the fish of clear rivers.

Whenever it is possible, by all means fish with a short line upstream. Let your flies come down naturally with the current, and when you strike a fish, endeavour to work him downstream, and get him in the landing-net with as much expedition and as little ado as possible.

In hot weather, when the rivers are low, your chance of taking trout with the artificial fly is not great until sunset. At such seasons you may fall back upon two methods of fishing. The first is dapping the natural fly in the pools. For dapping you require a short, rather stiff rod, and a fairly stout cast about a yard long. At the junction of the reel line with the cast fix a heavy leger bullet, and to the end

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of the cast fasten a roach hook. Then procure a butterfly net, and two or three chip boxes, and proceed to catch any insects that are on the wing, or which may be found resting on boughs. Blue-bottles, daddy-long-legs, stone-flies, alders, and any big-bodied flies can be used as dapping baits. Impale your live fly on the hook, through the thorax, handling it gently. You must creep and crawl about amongst the bushes by the water-side, until you see a trout standing or feeding close to the bank. Keep out of his line of vision, wind up the line till the bullet reaches the top ring of the rod, push the rod quietly through, by, or over a bush, and let the fly drop gently on the water.

If you are extremely careful in stalking and can contrive to keep your fly alive,

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it is almost a certainty that you will catch big trout by dapping. When a fish rises, pause a second, strike firmly, and unless he is very heavy, lift him out without ceremony. Green caterpillars, grasshoppers, and sometimes a small red worm will answer as dapping baits in hot weather.

Clear water worm fishing is practised in the north by many fishermen during indifferent weather for fly-fishing. It is an art worth learning, and it is not a simple matter. Your cast must be very fine and lightly shotted. The hook used is generally a Pennell or a Stewart. The Stewart is a combination of three small hooks on gut; the Pennell has only two hooks. A red worm or a brandling, is impaled on the three hooks, and with a short line, the fisherman casts upstream

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as he wades in the water, or creeps along the bank. The worm should be dropped in front of rocks, and behind them, in eddies, and off the sides of runs, and allowed to swim down with the stream. A check, or tightening of the line, is the signal to strike.

Trout will take a small Devon, quill, or phantom minnow in broken water or in almost any part of a river after a spate. The minnow must be kept moving in a lively manner, but not spun too fast. You will probably prick more fish than you will catch, still, under the right conditions, you will have no reason to be dissatisfied with your basket at the end of the day.

A natural minnow, mounted on a small Chapman spinner, is a deadly bait for trout during high water. The drop minnow, weighted with lead, and used in

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the sink-and-draw style, is also very attractive in deep pools and eddies, especially when the river is discoloured with peat water.

LAKE FISHING FOR TROUT

Lake trout vary very remarkably in different waters in their habits and as regards the weight which they attain. In some lochs, the trout average six, or even less, to the pound, while in other pools, in the same district, the fish may average over a pound. The biggest trout are caught in lakes, usually with a natural spinning bait, trolled sixty or eighty yards behind a boat, but fine fish occasionally take an artificial fly. This is the case in the now famous Blagdon Reservoir, and in a few other artificially stocked waters of the kingdom.

For fly-fishing in a lake, a fresh breeze

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is essential, for trout are suspicious of an artificial fly in dead calm water, unless the lake is deeply stained after a flood. A south, west, or north-west wind will be found favourable, and in some lochs trout rise well during a high gale. A calm usually puts an end to lake fishing, though now and again trout will take a fly, deeply sunk, on a still day.

Lake trout feed principally on the windy side of the water, and the biggest fish often swim close to the banks. But wherever there is a hatch of flies, the trout will be found in wait for them. Bays are generally good casting places, especially if they shelve suddenly from the shore, for fish often take up a position where the deep water begins, or "on the broo," as they say in Scotland. Weedy corners are also favourite haunts of lake trout, and the

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fly should be cast close to beds of rushes, which often harbour good fish. Rocky promontories seem to attract fish, and wherever bushes hang over the water, you are sure to rise a trout or two.

It is easy to drift in a boat and let the wind carry your flies on to the water. This is a very usual mode of fishing, but it is far from being the most profitable. Of course, if the trout are madly eager for flies, this lazy method of fishing will serve well enough. On the other hand, the angler who can cast against the wind, if need be, and has learned how to work his flies in the trough, instead of across the crest of the waves, will undoubtedly catch the most fish. In lake fishing, the fly is usually sunk, and moved with short, slow jerks.

If trout are rising, and there is the least

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ripple on the lake, a dry-fly will often do far more execution than a sunk fly. During a rise, fish the dry-fly, and pay no heed to the dogmatists who say that you cannot fish the dry-fly on a lake. In pools where the trout are said to rise infrequently to the fly, it is a good plan to row the boat very slowly, and let the fly sink almost to the bottom. A bright fly with tinsel may be used. Fish with about fifty yards or more of line behind the boat. For shy lake trout use one small fly and a fine cast, and try to avoid any disturbance of the water with the sculls.

In many lakes you can wade out several yards from the shore, and this is better than fishing from a boat, especially when the water is clear and very shallow. I have caught pound trout in less than a foot of water; so do not neglect to fish

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the shallows, paying special regard to weed-beds and clumps of reeds.

Spinning for lake trout will succeed well in some waters, but not in others. For the ferox of the Scotch lochs, you must spin with a natural or artificial bait, when a fresh breeze is blowing. Small lake trout will often take a Devon minnow, a quill minnow, or a phantom on breezy days and after heavy rains. In deep water, the bait must be sunk with the lead attached to the trace.

THAMES TROUT

These grand trout are not caught every day in the week during the season, though now and then a favoured angler has the luck to capture a brace in a day. It is useless to fish at random for these

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cunning monsters. You must learn the feeding haunts of Thames trout, and patiently live-bait for them from early morn till eve, if you wish to make a score during the season.

The trout of the Thames frequent weir-pools, sharp streams, and deep holes. They are seldom enticed with the fly; the usual method of fishing of them is with a live bleak. The cast must be of salmon gut, or at least of grilse strength. The bait is hooked through both lips with a fairly large hook, and allowed to play near the surface of the water, off the foaming rush from a weir, or in an eddy where trout are known to feed. A bottle cork with a nick in it to hold the line is generally used for a float. The rod must be limber, but not so slight as a fly-rod. At least eighty yards of good silk running

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line should be used on a Nottingham check reel, fitted with a line guard.

GRAYLING FISHING

Grayling are in their prime from September until Christmas. They are bolder rising fish than trout, and not such strong fighters, though a pound grayling gives lively sport in a rough stream. Grayling fishing is a winter sport, and the keener the frost, the more readily, as a rule, will these fish come to the bait. On dull, mild days in October and November grayling frequently rise well to the fly, either dry or wet.

There are several patterns of artificial flies specially tied for grayling. Tinsel is attractive to grayling, but they frequently prefer sober flies to gaudy ones. The

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red tag is recommended as a grayling fly; and for the Derbyshire and Staffordshire rivers the favourite flies are those wingless nondescripts known as "bumbles." The apple-green dun is another popular fly in the Midland Counties. Green is said to be specially enticing to grayling.

The biggest grayling resort to the pools in winter, and are to be sought at tail ends, and in the slow streams of the inlets, while smaller grayling appear to haunt every part of the river. When a grayling rises, he usually causes a chain of bubbles to float down the stream, and generally he comes to the surface with more splash than a trout. If you watch a length of a river in which both trout and grayling are rising, you will soon learn to distinguish the different rises. When you see bubbles, cast your flies and let

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them sink, working them gently down-stream.

If grayling are rising, no matter at what time of the year, you can fish with the floating fly. Do not be hasty in playing a grayling, as their mouths are rather soft, and undue force will cause the hook to lose its hold. Where grayling have been educated by constant fishing, you will find that they need as much coaxing as trout. These fish have a trick of coming up to a floating fly with apparently no intention of taking it. Such false rises are very common on the Derbyshire Wye and the Dove, two much fished and crystal rivers. But though a grayling will refuse a fly a dozen, or even a score of times, he will often seize it in the end; therefore do not declare that the fish are off feed, when they merely require persistent tempting.

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Grayling take red worms, brandlings, gentles, and dock grubs. In Yorkshire, bait anglers use a tiny round float, and a fine gut cast, with two or three shot on it to cock the float and to keep the bait down. Frosty weather is preferred for bait-fishing. The streams and the flowing pools are fished with this tackle, and a few worms or maggots are thrown in at the top of each swim, to attract the fish to the hook.

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VI

How to Fish for Pike and Perch

SPINNING FOR PIKE

I think it will be generally admitted that the most artistic method of catching pike is with a spinning bait. Spinning, whether performed in the Nottingham, Thames, or Devonshire styles, as described in the chapter on "Salmon Fishing," is a mode of fishing requiring considerable skill. It is also an excellent exercise on a chilly winter day, when it is to be preferred above live-baiting.

To spin for pike, it is essential that the water shall be of fair depth and not thickly grown with weeds near the surface.

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Fortunately, the November frosts usually kill most of the undergrowth of rivers; and when frost has done its work, pike are in the height of condition, and keenly watchful for their prey. All things considered, it is better not to fish for pike until September, at the earliest, for pike are later than most coarse fish in regaining condition after spawning. It is now becoming a fairly general rule among scrupulous fishermen to defer pike-fishing until the late autumn.

The weather that induces pike to feed cannot be foretold by a reading of the barometer, but I have noted that a westerly wind, with a little sunshine at intervals, is a favourable sign in October and November. A breeze is indispensable for spinning in lakes, and in rivers also, except in the very deep pools.

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Even a gale, if it blows from a warm quarter, is to be welcomed. Heavy rain seems to enliven pike in summer, but I am not so sure that it has this effect in the cold months.

It is almost beyond question that pike are more readily enticed by a natural than an artificial spinning bait. I say "almost," because it is not certain that an alluring contrivance of bright metal and paint may not prove the better attraction in waters swarming with small fish. For instance, the pike of Langorse Lake take a spoon-bait in preference to a natural bait. We hear also on the testimony of anglers that a "kill-devil," or some such thing, often succeeds when a dace or gudgeon fails. Still, the natural bait is the spinner's standby, and it is indeed hard to beat

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a bright dace or a bleak as baits for pike.

The worst of a bleak is his tenderness. He is soon pulled to pieces on a spinning tackle. Of course, you can toughen bleak by keeping them in a solution of formalin; but preserved baits are not quite so bright and clean as fresh-caught fish. Dace are somewhat harder, and they are a pretty bait in the eyes of a pike, especially in waters where they never breed. Gudgeon are not so showy as dace or bleak, but they are good in clear water, and they stand a lot of rough usage. Sprats are as soft as bleak; they are, however, excellent spinning baits for thickish water.

The cheeks and spikes of the ordinary bait-carriers certainly assist the angler in quickly mounting the bait. Their draw-

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back is that they disfigure the bait more or less and lend an artificial guise to it. On the whole, I am inclined to cast my vote for the two triangle hooks on gimp. This tackle is threaded with a baiting needle from the vent of the bait and out of the mouth, leaving the bottom triangle to play free, while the upper triangle is attached to the fish by one hook. In addition a lip-hook may be used to make the bait more secure. With this form of spinning tackle the hooks are in the right place, near the tail of the bait.

I do not underrate the Chapman spinner, which I have often used, and found very convenient; nor is there anything in the way of a bait-carrier much handier than the Bedford.

For casting the spinning bait, I know no better style than the Nottingham,

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already described. You can cast far in this method, and it is on the whole the simplest way of handling a spinning bait. In large lakes, provided that they are not very weedy, the easiest method of spinning is to take a boat and row gently along the shores, with your rod resting on the gunwale and your bait trailing at the end of sixty yards of line. This is called "trolling" in Scotland and Ireland, and it used to be known as "trailing" in the days when this form of fishing was permitted in the Thames.

In spinning for pike do not work the bait too quickly; cause it to give a wobble now and then by jerking your rod top. When the water is deep, let the bait sink, keep the rod low down, and wind in slowly. If the water is shallow, hold the rod higher. Try the bays of rocky lakes, and

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the vicinity of beds of reeds in meres. In rivers, spin along the verge of rushes, in deep holes, below weirs, and in quiet corners out of the flow of the stream. Towards evening pike often come close to the banks in search of small fry, and you may often hook a big fish about sundown by spinning in the shallow water.

Any of the spinning reels described in the chapter on "Salmon" will serve your purpose for pike-fishing. They may be used with an optional mechanical check, or the brake may be applied with the thumb against the rim of the reel. A line guard should be provided for every spinning reel.

Many pike rods are made too stiff for spinning from the reel. You need a rod with some spring and give in it, though it must not be weak and floppy. Combina-

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tion rods of cane and greenheart are inexpensive and serviceable. If you wish to possess a superior pike rod, you can buy one of split cane. You will not require another rod for live-bait fishing, provided that you supply yourself with a good spinning rod. A short stout rod, of the bean-pole pattern, is not suitable for pike-fishing with fine tackle.

Sometimes, especially in winter, it is difficult to obtain baits for spinning. It is well, therefore, to keep a stock of dace, bleak and gudgeon, preserved in a solution of formalin, in tightly corked jars. When buying formalin tell the chemist for what purpose you require it. As a rule, about a dessert-spoonful of the undiluted formalin added to a pint of water is strong enough for your solution. Spirits of wine may also be used as a preservative. Formalin

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toughens the baits, but it is apt to destroy the bloom and freshness of their scales.

The artificial baits for spinning are numerous. The old-fashioned spoon, with two triangle hooks, and the inner side of the spoon painted red, is often attractive to pike. Soleskin phantom minnows are useful, and they can be bought in different sizes. Devon minnows are sometimes used for spinning for pike. Besides these there are several other artificial baits, such as the "kill-devil" and Hearder's bait. A big Alexandra fly will often catch a pike or two from a weedy place where spinning is scarcely possible. The fly should be cast and worked as in salmon-fishing.

LIVE-BAITING FOR PIKE

My remarks concerning natural spinning baits apply to live-baits. Let your live-

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baits be fresh and bright. They must be carried in a bait can, and the water should be changed about every two hours, or oftener in hot weather. It is a good plan to sink your can in a running stream while fishing. Dace, bleak and gudgeon are good baits, and at a pinch you can use roach, or a perch, with the dorsal fin clipped off. Chub are not esteemed as pike baits, nor are small barbel often used, though I once caught two pike with a five-inch barbel, from the Loddon, when other baits were refused throughout the day. Goldfish are attractive in thick water.

Float fishing for pike is practised in rivers where there is a fair stream and not too many weeds and obstructions. To a yard of medium salmon gut attach a Jardine snap tackle on gimp. A spiral lead should be twisted on to the gut about

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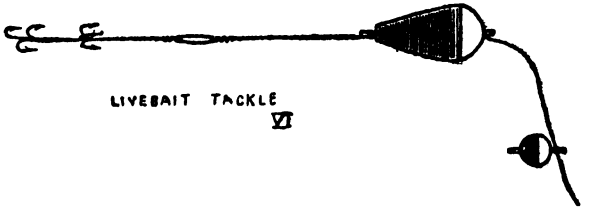
a foot above the bait. Handle your live-bait gently, and insert one of the hooks of the upper triangle through the skin close to the back fin. The other hook should be fastened below the gill case.

Your float should be of cork, with a cleft in it to admit the line, and a peg to



LIVEBAIT TACKLE
VI

keep the line in its place. All tackle dealers keep these improved pike floats. To prevent the line from sagging in the water, when fishing far off, attach another, but much smaller pegged float to the line about a yard above the big float. Some anglers use two small floats to keep the line from sinking.

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If you have a proper reel, you can cast out your live-bait in the same manner as when spinning. Wind the top float up to the ring of rod, swing your rod, and let the line slide through the rings. When the stream is sharp, pay out line as the float sails down. In this way you can fish a long swim by the rushes, or in a weir stream.

You will observe that your float often jumps and bobs in an agitated fashion when a pike is prowling near the bait. When you see this sign, be ready for a "run." Sometimes the float sinks out of sight without any premonitory signal, and sometimes, when a pike grips the bait, it sails along quickly without sinking. Do not strike furiously when you note this behaviour of your float. Let the pike swim away for a few yards, then promptly

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wind the hooks into him. If you run a fish at some distance from the boat or bank, it may be necessary to strike with rather more force. Generally speaking, I hook a pike by winding in the line rapidly, and then giving a sharp jerk with the rod top.

Play your pike firmly, but cautiously, and do not attempt to net or gaff him until he shows symptoms of fatigue. Promptness, coolness and steadiness of aim are essential in gaffing fish.

In clear water, and in all rivers where pike are accustomed to the wiles of anglers, you should use a single hook on fine gimp, or, better still, on gut. The bait should be hooked through both lips. Use a small float, and fish as carefully and quietly as possible. You will lose a few fish through having the gut bitten by

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their sharp, saw-like teeth; but if you are cautious, you may capture big pike on slender tackle, and a single hook mounted on gut.

The paternoster is used in deep water, in weedy meres, and in corners where it is difficult to work a float tackle. I have given directions for making a perch paternoster. The tackle for pike must be stronger, and the bullet heavier. Attach the hook to a swivel in the gut, or fix it with a loop of the gimp, pinching on two big shot, above and below the loop. But there is no need to use shot if the gut is properly looped into the gimp. A swivel is better, on the whole, as the gimp is apt to quickly fray the gut. You can use a small pike float with the paternoster. By moving about, and dropping the bait in here and there, you can fish a wide stretch

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of water with the paternoster. When pike are shy, remove the gimp-mounted hook, and replace with a single hook on gut, and a smaller bait.

PERCH FISHING

Perch frequent gravel beds, the neighbourhood of piles, stumps, campsheathings, tree roots, and beds of water-lilies. They usually swim in shoals; and if you discover a company of them, it is probable that you will catch several in a short space of time. Perch are bold feeders, and less shy than roach. They bite readily in cold weather, and do not appear to be much affected by heat. In rivers and ponds where diminutive perch abound, you may take five or six dozen in a day's fishing. Big perch are not so easily lured, but they

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are sometimes singularly voracious and off their guard.

For perch it is not necessary to use the finest tackle, though it need not be coarse. A fairly big float is usually employed, but this is not essential. Bait with red worms, brandlings, or small lobworms, though the red worm is the best bait, and let the worm swim, sunk a little below mid-water. Change your position every half-hour, if the fish are not biting. It is a good plan to raise the worm now and then to the surface, and let it drop again slowly. This will often excite perch to seize the bait.

To draw perch together, bait in likely places with a handful of worms, which may be mixed with clay, if the stream is rapid, in order to sink them in the right spot. The clay will also stain the

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water, and attract perch to the swim. An old-fangled plan for inciting perch to assemble is to fill a glass pickle jar with water and to place live minnows in the jar. The mouth of the jar must be covered with perforated zinc, or a piece of flannel tightly tied, and the jar should have a length of cord attached to the neck to lift it from the water.

The paternoster is a good tackle for weedy holes and corners, and for fishing among submerged stumps and stakes, where perch often congregate. One hook, the upper one, should be baited with a live minnow or a small gudgeon hooked through both lips. The bottom hook, which should be about eighteen inches from the bed of the river, is generally baited with a lively worm. If perch are taking minnows freely, it is

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best to bait both hooks with a live minnow.

When using the paternoster, keep the line tight from the tip of the rod to the weight at the end of the gut, and hold the reel line between the finger and thumb of the right hand. A bite will usually cause a jerk of the top joint of the rod, and you will also feel a "pluck" at the line. Slacken out about four inches of line at the first nibble, and at the second pluck, strike, and play your fish quietly to the bank. In shallow clear water you may fish with a minnow on a light gut cast. A small drilled bullet may be slid on the gut to sink the bait. No float should be attached to this tackle, which is very useful for fishing in the height of summer when perch frequently come into the

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shallows early in the morning and at sunset. Give a little time before striking your fish, and get him away from his companions as quickly as possible.

Perch will sometimes take a spinning minnow, natural or artificial. They occasionally seize a brightly coloured artificial fly, especially if there is tinsel in the dressing. Perch, when on the feed, will take almost anything that appears edible to them. I have caught them with bread paste and scraps of cooked meat.

Perch are generally hungry when the weather changes after a long frost, and they will take worms greedily at such times, unless there is melting snow in the water. In the height of summer they feed most eagerly early and late in the day.

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VII

ROACH AND BREAM

THE prolific and almost universal roach is a very popular fish. He gives harmless sport to thousands of artisan anglers in nearly every part of the British Islands; and affords a topic for interminable discussion among the enthusiasts of the roach-pole and the tight line.

Roach are by no means stupid fish, although Walton says that "the roach is accounted the water-sheep for his simplicity or foolishness." I think that the worthy Izaak would have cause to alter his judgment of the roach if he spent a day after the wary fish of the

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lower Thames and the Lea. Roach are not unintelligent, they are shy and alert. In over-stocked ponds, where roach swarm and are half-starved, these fish show reckless courage in seizing a worm or a bit of paste. But the goodly roach of such rivers as the Avon, the Arun, and the Thames are not to be caught by the dozen, unless the fisherman knows his business.

Roach are easily scared and driven from their haunts. I have watched them in a clear pond for hours together, and I am of the opinion that they are as keen-sighted as trout. A shadow thrown on the water, a concussion caused by stamping on the bank, or a bungling cast with heavy tackle will frighten roach from a swim. Roach are apt to be "gut shy" and very cautious in taking a bait.

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They feed well after rain, and in slightly discoloured water, but are watchful and suspicious when the stream is low and the weather sunny. Experienced roach fishermen can tell at a glance when the water is in the right order for their sport.

Roach feed on, or near, the bottom, though at times they rise to the surface, and take floating insects. They are, however, known as "bottom fish." Your bait must just clear the bed of the stream, and not drag upon it. Roach like a fairly clean hard bottom as a feeding ground. They are not averse to sharp runs in some rivers, and the roach of such waters are brighter and livelier than those bred in sluggish streams and old pools. Pond roach are often slimy and ill-conditioned. These fish thrive in suitable ponds, and

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usually attain a greater weight than in streams.

Most of our south country roach-specialists use a long cane roach pole, with a tight line of very fine gut. This is a good weapon for slow streams and ponds. The pole has a long reach; it is easy to hit a fish with it, and it can be shortened if needed, by removing the butt. The roach pole can also be used with a very small float.

For fishing long swims and sharp streams, the Nottingham tackle is to be preferred. The ordinary twelve-feet bottom-fishing rod will be suitable for this style, if it is not too stiff to respond quickly to a strike when a long line is out. A heavier float and more shot on the cast are required for the Nottingham fishing. The method of working consists in allow-

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ing the float to move with the stream, without any check upon it, until the length of line becomes unmanageable. The float is dropped in lightly upstream, when bank fishing, and as it passes the angler, he begins to let out line gently from the reel. When fishing from a boat, it is obvious that the float should be dropped in below the craft, about half a rod's length from it, and allowed to swim down. The hook for roach should be a number 9 or 10.

Bagging of the reel line in the water is almost inevitable in fishing long swims; but this may be largely remedied by well greasing the line from time to time with deer's fat, mutton fat, or vaseline.

The float should be of a sober colour and slender in shape. Some roach fishers use a black cork float with a white tip. A

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long swan quill will serve in most swims, but in heavy, deep water, exposed to winds, a cork float is better.

It is a waste of time to fish unbaited places unless the roach are remarkably numerous. Some beginners err by over-baiting their swims, and gorging the fish. A few handfuls of boiled wheat or barley, a little soaked bread and bran, or a score or so of gentles may be thrown in at the top of the swim, to attract the roach. In my early days we used to ground bait with bread, bran, and clay, mixed into sticky puddings, and hurl in this stuff, without much regard to the nerves of the roach. It is a far better plan to squeeze a little soaked bread on to the shots, and let the stream wash it gently down.

Over-night ground baiting may be recommended when the water is big and

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the roach not abundant. In most coarse-fish rivers it is not necessary to lavish a great quantity of carefully prepared ground bait upon roach. A little soaked bread and bran in each swim is sufficient. Now and then, some fresh bait may be quietly placed above the top of the swim, and allowed to sink down to the fish.

To ascertain the depth of the swim, you must use a folding plummet. Unroll an inch of the plummet, and roll it round the shank of the hook, lower quietly into the water, and find the depth at which you should adjust your float, to allow the bait to swim just clear of the bottom.

Many Norfolk fishermen use no cap to the float, but simply pass the cast through a small bottom ring. Whether this plan is an aid in casting, I am unable to say from experience. It is probable, however, that

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when roach-fishing in this method, it is easier to strike quickly and to detect nibbles.

Roach are somewhat fastidious in their feeding habits. Sometimes they take white paste, at others yellow or red paste, and in autumn they appear to fancy bread crust more than any bait. After rain, roach will often take a red worm, or the tail of a lobworm. They are also fond of gentles, but will not always feed on them. Boiled or soaked white wheat is used as a bait by some anglers.

Paste is made by well soaking a piece of white bread and kneading it in a clean rag until it is sufficiently tough to remain on the hook. Do not handle your paste with the bare fingers as roach refuse soiled paste. To make yellow paste add a little

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saffron. Red paste can be made by mixing a little powdered vermilion. A piece about the size of a pea should be put on the hook, covering the bend and the shank as neatly as possible.

Gentles should be kept in sand or fine bran, and not exposed to a hot sun. It is becoming the custom among North country fishermen to stain gentles with red, yellow, and blue dyes. I cannot say whether this device is worth the trouble. But there is no doubt that yellow paste is excellent for both roach and bream.

Bread cubes are now used almost universally by roach fishermen. The crust must be cut from a white loaf, soaked in water, and cut up into dice or cubes, when nearly dry. In most waters bread-crust is an unfailing bait.

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In very deep swims where there is a heavy stream, the leger must be used instead of float tackle. The gut should be fine, and a yard in length.

BREAM FISHING

You must ground-bait pretty freely for bream, if you wish to make heavy "takes." The bream is a shoal fish, and fond of wandering, and to detain bream in one place you must offer them something that will excite their interest or their appetites. Ground-bait with a mixture of boiled wheat and soaked bran, which should be thrown into a few swims the night before fishing. Bream fishermen are rather fussy about their ground baits; but I think that wheat is as good as anything that can be used. If you prefer it, try boiled rice,

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potato, bread, and bran made into a pudding.

The general instructions on roach-fishing apply to fishing for bream. But you must remember that these fish grow to a weight of four pounds and over, and so provide suitable gut for your fishing, whether it be with the float or leger. A twelve-feet bottom rod, a free running reel, a silk line of barbel strength, a cork float, two or three yards of gut, and a strong hook are required for bream-fishing. You must carry a landing-net with a large ring.

Bream are less shy than roach, though they are not devoid of caution. When fishing in shallow waters, you will have indifferent sport unless you can cast your tackle several yards from the boat or bank. A rod that will cast well, and a line that

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shoots freely through the rings, are requisite for this kind of fishing. To assist in long casting, it is well to have a somewhat cumbersome cork float and plenty of shot on the gut. For long casts some fishermen prefer a dressed reel line.

Float tackle can be used for bream in six or eight feet of water, but in deep rivers the leger is the handier tackle. When legering you may use two hooks, number 5 size. One should be baited with paste, and the other with a lobworm. Bream seldom take bait in the winter. The best months for bream fishing are from July to the end of September. Sometimes bream feed well in the hottest weather during August.

The best baits for the hook are a well-scoured worm, the tail of a lobworm, or two or three gentles. But yellow paste

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is often used with success in hot weather; and a piece of cooked beef is not a bad bait upon occasions. It has been noted that the heaviest bream are caught when the bait is allowed to trail on the bottom. If two hooks are used, the bottom hook should drag six, or even twelve inches on the bottom, and the other nearly touch the bottom.

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VIII

Carp and Tench Fishing

THE CARP

This is an elusive, wary fish, not easy to entice, but well worth the patience and the strategy which must be employed in his capture. It is not a very common fish in English rivers, but it is found in old moats, ancient stews, and weedy ponds in many parts of England.

Carp are extremely capricious. They afford sport in warm weather, and are very rarely caught in the winter months, when they are said to bury themselves in the mud, and to lie torpid until the spring.

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On sultry days in early summer carp rise to the surface to sun themselves, and at this time it is very difficult to capture even two or three fish. There is the chance, however, of catching a specimen or two on a brilliant day when the fish are basking, if you can keep out of their sight and quietly drop a hook, baited with gentles, into the school. The tackle must be strong, and yet not coarse, and no float is required.

Success in carp-fishing is more likely of your attainment when rain has slightly stained the water and excited the fish to quest for food. After a night of heavy showers in August your wiles may succeed signally; for there are times when carp abandon their reserve, and come sniffing around the angler's bait. The chief point in fishing for carp is to abstain from any

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proceeding that is likely to render them timid and suspicious.

If you put in ground bait, let it be done the day before fishing, and do not throw in more than a little soaked bread, or a few worms and gentles, while you are fishing. Carp resort to the edges of weed beds, and are fond of haunting the jungles of water-lily roots. If the pond is densely weed-grown, you must find an open space where you can, and there deposit your ground-bait of soaked bread and bran. Bait three or four places, if possible. As you have to contend with a very sapient fish, contrive to angle from behind a screen of rushes, or a bush, and stand well back from the bank, even if the water is deep. The bait for the hook may be sweet paste, gentles, or worms. Sweet paste is ordinary paste flavoured

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with honey. I do not know the name of the genius who invented this bait, but it is the best for carp in hot weather. Keep the bait spotlessly clean, and place a piece about the size of a small hazel nut on your hook.

Inferior gut is useless for carp fishing, and your hooks must be well-tempered. I have lost heavy carp through the breakage or the straightening out of hooks; therefore use the very best hooks that can be obtained. You may use a small porcupine quill float. The gut must be of medium stoutness and good quality.

Approach your baited places with a light step, and if there is no cover available, crouch down while you fish. Avoid splashing the water with your cast and float, and grease the reel line to prevent

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sagging in the water. The biggest carp often take the bait without pulling the float under. Be on the alert for any movement of the float; see that the line is not slack, and if the float sails slowly through the water, lift the rod top, and strike your fish. Play carp carefully, and bring them out of the shoal with expedition.

In rainy weather, you may bait with a well-scoured lobworm, which has been kept in damp moss for several days. The bait, whether paste or a worm, must be sunk almost to the bottom of the pond.

THE TENCH

Tench and carp are often found in company. Good days with tench do not fall to the lot of a large number of

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fishermen, for these fish are singularly uncertain in their appetites. Upon occasions tench wake up from their lethargy and allow themselves to be captured by the dozen. These occasions are, however, somewhat rare. You must be content with three or four good fish in an ordinary day's fishing, even when the tench are abundant.

Tench are probably less cunning than carp, still they are not free feeders, and they must be induced to assemble by tempting them with ground-bait. For this purpose there is nothing better than lobworms, thrown in without stint. If you bait heavily on three days running, and fish on the fourth day, you may have the luck to find the tench enjoying an orgy, and off their guard.

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Scour your lobs for the hook, and select the liveliest males, viz. :—those without knots in them. Use sound tackle; fish near the bottom, and keep quiet.

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IX

BARBEL

THESE gross, bottom-feeding fish are not table luxuries, but they give excellent sport in the Thames, Trent, and other rivers during the summer. The reason why comparatively few anglers fish for barbel is because of the uncertainty of inducing the fish to feed. "No other fish which we are acquainted with is so capricious as the barbel," writes Mr George Rooper in *Thames and Tweed.* This is an estimate that few fishermen will call into question.

And yet at times the voracity and bold-

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ness of barbel are things to wonder at. You may fish a swim for a week without getting so much as a nibble for your pains, while, if the fish are hungry, you may take them by the stone weight in a few hours. To be a barbel fisherman, you need plenty of hope and a fine capacity for patience.

It is doubtful whether you can bait too heavily for barbel. Enthusiasts of the sport on the Thames throw in lobworms by the sovereign's worth, and fairly cover several yards of the river with them. It is almost futile to bait places on the chance that barbel are there. The wisest course is to glean information from a friendly fisherman who is not unwilling to oblige you, or to pay a "professional" for his services in piloting you in a punt to baited holes.

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Some barbel holes can be fished with float tackle. The leger is the usual implement in the Thames. It should be of stout gut, a yard long, armed with a good No. 5 hook. The bullet must be adapted to the strength of the stream.

Keep the line tight after throwing in the leger, and the top of the rod in a straight line with the hook and near the water. Strike at the second pull, but remember that force may break your tackle, for barbel are heavy lumpish fish to strike and play. A fairly heavy strain should be kept upon a hooked fish, and the line should be slowly wound in as the barbel shows signs of defeat. Playing a barbel is a case of "pull devil, pull baker," till the fish is beaten or the angler left with a broken hook or cast.

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Barbel may be seen often in summer, lying in a foot or two of water in clear sharp streams. You may bait for them and fish for all that you are worth, but it is a thousand to one chance against catching a single fish under these conditions. I know several parts of the Thames where you may watch very big barbel rolling and sporting in shallow water, or basking near the surface in quiet corners of weir pools. Take it as an axiom that if you can see your barbel, you are hardly likely to induce him to swallow a bait. You must try your fortune in the deep holes, after a liberal ground-baiting, and resolve to accept a blank day with stoicism. But if you persevere your "crowded hour" will come sooner or later.

A tender-topped roach rod will not

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serve for legering for big barbel. The rod must be powerful though not stubborn, and the line must be sufficiently stout to bear a heavy strain.

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X

NOTES ON CHUBBING

It is an exciting moment in fly-fishing when a lumbering chub of three or four pounds takes your olive dun, and goes boring away in a deep run. Your little rod bends to the curve of a sickle, the line screams from the reel, and you prepare yourself for a severe contest with a stubborn fish. Fishing for chub with the fly is a pleasant amusement when the rivers are too bright for bottom fishing, and if you choose you may have good sport with the "loggerhead" by bait fishing when the stream is fringed with ice in January.

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SURFACE FISHING FOR CHUB

This is the more scientific and fascinating mode of capturing chub in the warm months, when the fish feed just below the surface in the shade of overhanging boughs and in the gravelly scours below weir pools. The most effective bait at this season is a small frog from one to two inches long. You will find your baits in almost any damp meadow near the water when the dew is on the grass. Kill the frog with a tap on the head before hooking him, and run the hook through both lips. Cast as in fly-fishing, try to keep the frog on the surface, and move it in short sharp jerks close to the willow and alder boughs that touch water. In rivers, when wading is not practicable, obtain a boat and an attendant, and let

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your craft move slowly and quietly up the stream, and well away from the bank. Cast as near as you dare to the boughs, for the chub lie under them. A swirl or a tug will apprise you that a fish has risen to your bait. Give rather more time than you would to a trout, and then drive in the hook.

The chub will endeavour to gain the boughs, and if he succeeds in getting his snout among submerged branches or roots, you will most probably lose him. If you use a strong trout cast it is safe to put a strain on the chub and bring him out from the bank into open water. But be careful that he does not bore beneath the boat. Your companion should hold the boat still while you play the fish.

When chub are visible it is not easy to entice them unless you keep yourself out

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of their range of observation. A waving rod or a shadow will usually cause basking chub to sink quietly and deliberately out of sight. After a scare they do not re-appear for some time. Therefore, fish far off when the sun is high and bright, and if you are casting from the bank take advantage of every bit of cover in stalking.

A live grasshopper, a cockchafer, or a bluebottle deftly dropped in front of a chub lying near the top of the water is seldom refused. Almost any artificial fly will attract chub when they are in a rising humour, and I am not sure that the big buzzy flies sold as "chub flies" are always the best to use. They are certainly almost worthless for fishing in very clear water, where you will stand the best chance with a small oiled floating fly.

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My experience in fly-fishing for chub ranges from such different waters as the Thames and the Annan, to the clear streams of central Spain, and the rivers of the Belgian Ardennes; and I have found that medium-sized flies kill the most fish, and that the dry-fly is especially attractive in bright water, and upon all occasions when chub are taking the natural insects on the surface.

In discoloured water you may use a bigger fly, but for fishing after a flood there is no bait to beat the tail of a lob-worm, cast like a fly, and allowed to sink a few inches. This is a good surface bait in the Thames when the river is stained.

BOTTOM FISHING FOR CHUB

Chubbing in the Nottingham style is an interesting pastime in summer or

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winter. Proceed as in Nottingham roach-fishing, but fish the sharp shallows and off the edges of boughs. The bait may swim about mid-water in summer, and rather deeper in winter. Chub will take worms, gentles, grubs, paste, a piece of cheese, a live minnow, a cherry, a blackberry, and a hairy caterpillar. In winter the pith from the backbone of an ox is a favourite Thames bait. For summer fishing I have found cheese paste almost infallible. As you will need to fish swift runs and glides, use a rather heavy long cork float and plenty of shot.

Chub sometimes congregate in deep holes, and when they are in such harbours you will reach them more readily with a leger than with float tackle. In winter bait with ox marrow, lobworms, or dock

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grubs, in summer with bread paste, cheese paste, or gentles. During frosty weather, well grease your line to prevent a coating of ice, and occasionally oil the rings of the rod.

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XI

DACE FISHING

THE sportive, silvery dace is a surface-feeding fish from spring till autumn. Many trout anglers hold the dace in esteem for the assistance which he rendered them in their early practice of fly-fishing, while all pike fishermen respect him for the important part that he plays in the capture of the big pike of various waters throughout the kingdom. Fly-fishing for dace on a summer evening is pretty sport, and usually more profitable than bait fishing.

I have already given some counsel in dace fishing with the dry or wet fly, to

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which I may add a few more words. Dace are bolder than roach, and when feeding near the surface, or on the bed of the river, they are apt to display greediness. They rise all day to flies during the summer, but feed most hungrily about sunset, when the water in certain stretches is often ringed all over with their rises. During a rise of this hearty fashion, you will be certain to catch a dozen or two of dace with a floating black gnat, a midge, or any of the duns, dressed on small hooks. In the Mayfly season, you may capture scores of dace with an artificial green drake.

Dace are pluckier fighters than roach, and a half-pound fish is no mean prey on fine gut and a small trout rod, when hooked in a sharp stream. These fish are not easily tempted with any other

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fly when there is a hatch of a given kind of "naturals" which they fancy. Suit your fly to your taste, and fish fine, for, though daring, dace can be put down by a clumsy fisherman. After rain, a single gentle on a small hook, worked like a fly, will catch dace in the still pools of rivers.

In cool weather dace feed below the surface of the water, but they are not such deep feeders as roach. Your bait, when fishing with the float, should sink within about a foot of the bottom in deep, still swims, and may be in mid-water when fishing the shallows. Use very fine gut and small hooks, and bait with a little red worm, a gentle, or piece of paste. When you find a length of the stream abounding with dace, throw in a little soaked bread, or a few gentles, and fish in the Nottingham

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style, using a small quill float. Though dace are often found keeping company with roach, they swim in shoals of their own species, and frequent the shallower water in spring and summer. They like a gravel bottom, and glides about two feet in depth, and often lie in eddies and the tails of weir streams. Dace are rather late in spawning, and are in their best condition in August and September. They will rise to an artificial fly on mild days in October, and may even be seen rising in November when the sun is bright on the water.

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XII

Minor Freshwater Fish

EELS

I have placed the eel among the minor fish, though he compares very well with many other coarse fish in regard to weight, while the voracity that he displays is unquestioned. I am not "partial" to the eel myself, either on the hook or as a table delicacy, but I have at times fished for him, both in this country and in the South of Spain.

The merit of the eel is that he bites boldly in almost any kind of weather during the summer. Eels will take nearly

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every kind of bait. I have seen one caught on an artificial fly. The favourite bait is a lobworm or brandling, which must be allowed to lie on the bottom. A more attractive morsel is a piece of herring paste. Pound the flesh of a herring in a mortar, with a little water, and work it till tough. A piece of this is almost irresistible to eels. Another good bait is a bit of the entrails of a fowl or rabbit, as "high" as possible. Live minnows and gudgeon all attract eels, which often take a small dead fish on a leger.

Everyone knows that eels love mud, but they are not always found on soft bottoms, for they unfortunately abound in many clean, gravel-bedded trout streams, where they work sad havoc. I believe that the best eels for the table are found in such water.

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For eel tackle you do not require a gossamer cast. Fish for them with a leger of stoutish gut and a strong hook. When you have landed an eel, set your foot firmly on his neck while you remove the hook, or he will almost certainly foul your tackle. Sometimes it is necessary to sever his head from the body before you can remove the hook. Eels often swallow the bait well down their gullets, therefore take a disgorger with you when going eel fishing.

The Thames is full of eels, but Thames eels do not bite freely during the daytime. I have never heard any explanation of this idiosyncrasy. In most eel streams, these fish feed at almost any time of the day or night, especially when the water is turbid.

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GUDGEON

These are jolly little fish, which appear to have been evolved as food for pike and perch, and to give sport to schoolboys. Gudgeon fishing is not bad fun, when bigger fish refuse to be caught. It is a popular summer sport on the Thames, and it gives to many their initiation into the mysteries of angling.

Gudgeon like gravelly and sandy bottoms, and are generally found in rather shallow water. They lie on the bed of the river as though glued to it. If you catch one gudgeon, the chances are that you will catch many from the same swim. To bring them on the feed, stir up the bed of the stream a few yards above your swim, and let your bait sail down in the discoloured water. Gudgeon-

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rakes are used on the Thames for this purpose.

The bait must touch the bottom, or drag upon it. Use light gut, a little quill float, and a small hook, and bait with half of a small red worm, or a bit of a brandling. In summer gudgeon will sometimes take gentles.

One of the gudgeon's good qualities is his tastiness when fried in butter.

BLEAK

These bright sprats of freshwater are useful as live and spinning baits for pike and trout. Bleak feed in mid-water, or near the surface, and are to be found in any reach of the fishable Thames. To draw them together, throw a few pieces of dry bread on the water. As the bread floats down, send your float tackle after it,

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and bait the hook with one gentle, or a tiny ball of paste. You can catch bleak with a small artificial fly, floated or sunk. When bait fishing, let the bait sink about a foot or eighteen inches.

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XIII

SEA-FISHING GEAR

ANGLING for salt-water fish is by no means a later evolution of the art of taking fish with bait, though sea-fishing with rod, line and hook is usually referred to as a new recreation. Hand-lining for the fish of the sea is a primitive form of fishing, practised from the shore and boats in all parts of the globe. According to Ellis, the missionary, the Polynesians are the best fishermen in the world, and they have very wonderful tackle for the capture of bonitos and albicores, consisting of hand-made lines, hooks of shell and bone, and other cunning inventions. The Samoans use artificial sea flies of tortoise-shell and

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feathers, and the Dyaks of Borneo are excellent sea anglers, and deft tackle-makers.

There is perhaps little doubt that sea angling dates from the bronze age, as the oldest fish-hooks in our museums are of hardened bronze, some of them being double-barbed. The fish-hook succeeded the fish-spear of prehistoric man. In spite of the antiquity of sea-fishing with hook and line, the methods of English fishermen fifty years ago were exceedingly clumsy and unscientific. The latter half of this century has seen a wonderful development of sea angling, and an enormous increase of salt-water fishermen. There has been a complete revolution in tackle, and an almost general abandonment of the old methods of fishing in the sea.

The hand-line will soon be regarded

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as a curiosity among sea anglers, except as an implement for deep-sea fishing. Rods are now used by the great majority of those fishermen who pursue fish for pleasure, and the use of the rod has led to the invention of suitable tackle for this new style of salt-water fishing. Rods for the sea are of stouter build and differently fitted from those employed in fresh water-fishing. A sea rod is exposed to hard wear and the heavy strain of swift tides, the weight of big sinking leads, and the pull of powerful fish. It is generally used with a weighty paternoster lead, therefore stiffness is essential.

Most makers turn out sea-fishing-rods, varying in length from seven to twelve feet, but eight or nine feet appears to be the favourite length for general sea-rods used in boats. The rods are fitted with

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big rings, lined with porcelain or agate, and the top ring serves the purpose of a pulley. Greenheart, whole cane and split cane are used for these rods, and for the luxurious cork handles are provided. The rods are usually constructed in two joints, when they are under ten feet in length, and this lends additional strength.

A general rod for sea angling may be of mottled cane with a greenheart top. A good rod can be obtained made of bamboo, with two greenheart tops—one for bait fishing in deep water, and the other for drifting and trailing. But for conger, big pollack and cod, a more powerful rod may be sometimes required, while for fishing from piers a rod of fourteen feet or longer is often used.

Reels must be large enough to take a hundred yards or more of line, when used

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for the bigger fish of the sea. The improved sea reels are made from walnut wood, or an ebonite preparation. They are fitted with optional checks, line guards, and strong metal backs, while some have extra powerful brakes worked with a lever.

For flat fish, mackerel, whiting and codling, forty to sixty yards of line will prove sufficient upon most occasions. The cheapest lines are of brown water cord. Better lines are perhaps not expensive in the longrun. They are made of plaited, tanned flax. A strong, cheap line is the "universal," costing only two shillings for a hundred yards, and sold by H. Dowsett of Hastings. It will stand the strain of a thirty-pound fish.

As sea lines are exposed to the rotting action of salt, they cannot be expected to last so long as lines used in rivers; but if

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they are well rinsed in fresh water after a day's fishing, they will stand longer. Constant greasing also tends to preserve them, and all lines should be dried after use, either on a dryer sold for the purpose, or by coiling them on a newspaper placed on the floor in a draughty position. The back of a kitchen chair is a good line-dryer.

There are very few kinds of sea fish around our coasts that cannot be caught with the paternoster. This is an important item in the sea-fisher's outfit, and a tackle that has undergone numerous modifications and improvements during recent years. Sea paternosters are now equipped with projecting metal booms attached to swivels, the hook depending from the end of the boom, which stands out well from the gut. For heavy fish twisted salmon gut is used, but for

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general use strong single gut of salmon strength is usually found to be adequate. The revolving boom, lately introduced, is an ingenious invention, which keeps the baits quietly moving in the water.

As the floor of the sea is often rocky, round weights are very unsuitable for sea paternosters, as they are apt to jam. A conical lead is preferable, and the Hemen's adaptable lead can be recommended. The patent "grip" sea lead supplied by Messrs Allcock & Co., is also a useful invention.

Eyed hooks are the handiest for the paternoster, and they should be enamelled with black, to prevent rusting. The hooks may be two or three in number; the upper hook should be about fifteen inches above the next and the bottom hook may be placed so that it will almost touch the ground when the paternoster is perpen-

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dicular in the water. A split pike float can be used with the paternoster.

A big landing-net or a gaff hook should be carried. The "priest," an instrument for killing fish, is also required whenever you go in search of conger, cod, bass and pollack. A disgorger should be part of your paraphernalia, and do not forget spare gut and hooks.

There are several artificial baits of repute amongst sea anglers. They are used for spinning and railing. Some of these baits represent sand eels, and they can be obtained either in red or grey india-rubber. Artificial sprats or small fry, spoon baits, clipper baits, parchment minnows, silver sand eels, and other fearfully and wonderfully made "lures" are on view in windows of tackle shops. One never knows what a pollack or a mackerel will take; so all or any of these baits may

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be used with effect. But the real sand eel and the natural sprat cannot be well improved upon for spinning.

Several species of sea fish feed upon the surface, and can be enticed with artificial flies, or something resembling a small fish. Bass and pollack flies are made for this purpose, and the ingenious angler can experiment as fully as he desires with various patterns of salmon and sea-trout flies. A salmon rod can be used for fly-fishing in the sea, though some of the rod makers sell a rod constructed especially for sea fly-fishing. The casts must be tough. To preserve them, always wash well in fresh water after use.

The sea angler will need warm clothing for winter fishing, and for wear upon summer nights, when the temperature is often low on the sea. A good macintosh, or a set of oilskins, should be included in

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the kit. Boots must be well dressed with dubbin to keep out the salt water. A pair of old wading stockings are useful both for shore work and when fishing from a boat in rainy weather. They will keep the legs and feet warm and dry.

If you fish with a boatman, see that he is a steady intelligent man, with a knowledge of fish, and a map of the bed of the bay in his head. Never pay much attention to his comments upon your tackle, for most professional fishermen sneer at the rod and modern fishing gear. They are, however, occasionally astonished at the success which attends the use of fine tackle and scientific methods.

Autumn is the sea-fishing season *par excellence*, though good sport may be enjoyed almost all the year round. A long drought and bright weather tend to make sea fish wary. Rainy, breezy weather is

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usually propitious, and high tides, and winds that induce fish to seek the shore, are welcomed by beach and pier fishermen.

Many estuaries abound with fish at certain seasons of the year; but before visiting them, it is necessary to ascertain whether the fish are moving up from the sea, or you may have a fruitless expedition. Generally speaking, the more rocks the more fish, so it is well to choose a coast with rocky indentations and sunken reefs, such as the coasts of Cornwall, parts of the east coast of Scotland, and the west of Ireland. But the sandy shores of East Anglia afford fine fishing, especially about Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Deal is one of the best sea angling places near London; and Weymouth, though farther afield, is an excellent resort from midsummer till November.

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CHAPTER XIV

BASS AND POLLACK FISHING

THE bass, or sea perch, is an interesting fish, possessed of great intelligence and endowed with much strength. Aristotle described the bass as the most cunning of fishes, while the Greeks acknowledged the voracity of this fish by giving him the name of *lupus*. Bass have capacious stomachs and correspondingly large appetites. They feed upon sand worms, small fishes of all sorts, the refuse of harbours and estuaries, and almost any thing or everything that appears edible.

Bass grow to twenty pounds in weight, but this weight is not usual. "School bass"—the smaller fish that swim in large companies—are usually about two or three

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pounds in weight. The bass frequent bays and tidal estuaries, sometimes ascending to the fresh water of rivers. A south-west gale drives these fish inshore and up the tidal waters; and the best season for angling for them is from midsummer to the end of autumn. They are not bold bait takers, when over eight or ten pounds in weight; but the shoal bass often feed with avidity, and may be caught with the spinning eel, or with fixed baits.

Bass are fond of sand eels, and when these fish are running, they pursue them to the highest tide-mark, and often wander up the dykes and narrow channels of salt marshes in search for food. The biggest bass usually swim in small companies of three or four, but the school bass congregate in hundreds. The agitation among the gulls at the incoming of a tide, indicates that small fish are working

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into shore, and when sand eels and fry abound, there are generally bass in their wake. This is the time to spin for bass with a natural or artificial sand eel. The natural eel can be hooked by the lip, with a single hook on salmon gut, and trolled behind a boat. Although bass swim near the surface, a light bullet or sinker must be on the gut, or the bait will drag on the top of the water.

Various spinning baits can be tried with bass, though there is nothing more attractive than the sand eel. Artificial bass flies are dressed on big hooks and contain gaudy colours in the dressing. A predominance of white is said to be fascinating. If fish of ten or twelve pounds are about, you will need to use a stout salmon cast, a long line, and a stiffish rod. Fish close to rocks fringed with sea-weed, along old piles, and at the outlets of

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estuaries when the tide is flowing in. Work the fly below water, and let it sink deep now and then, pulling it up with a lively motion to imitate the sporting of small fry.

Bass will take several kinds of bait. The bait should be sunk about mid-water. A piece of fat bacon is recommended, and crab, sand-worms, scraps of fish, and offal may be offered to bass when they come close into shore on the prowl for food.

POLLACK

These fish occasionally attain to more than twenty-five pounds in weight. They swim in shoals, and often come to the surface after small fry, especially about sunset. When pollack are feeding near the surface of the water, you can catch a good basket of them with a grilse fly, or a

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few feathers tied to a hook. Soleskin flies are now made for pollack fishing. The sand eel is an effective bait, and so is a live shrimp.

For the paternoster use ragworm on one hook, and a live sand-eel or shrimp on another. Fish near rocks, and in creeks at high water, sinking the bait almost to the bottom.

Your tackle must be of the best for pollack, and the reel should be provided with a long line.

The saithe, or coal-fish, is sometimes mistaken for the pollack, but it is a different fish, often reaching a greater weight than the pollack.

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CHAPTER XV

Other Sea Fish

THE CONGER

The biggest conger are generally caught at night, but these fish often feed in the daytime. Thirty pounds is not an uncommon weight for conger, and they have been caught up to a hundred pounds. Conger frequent rocky coasts, and feed upon small fish and lobsters. Although they are greedy feeders, congers are not reckless in taking an angler's bait, and they are said to be tackle-shy in many localities.

Conger-eel fishing at night is a weird sport. The fish are desperately strong on the hook, and have a knack of breaking away after a long struggle. They bore

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down into the depths, and hold on to the rocks with stubborn determination. Use the stoutest tackle, and let the hooks be mounted on sound gimp, as conger can easily bite through gut.

COD

The favourite food of the cod is shell-fish, and, as it is a bottom feeder, you must fish deep for it. Mussels, and shell-fish of various kinds are used for bait, but cod will take bits of fish entrails, and sand-worms. Cod grow to twenty pounds and over that weight. Use a stiff rod and heavy leads, and be ready for a big fight.

WHITING

Ten to twelve inches is the usual length of whiting. They swarm upon our coasts at certain seasons, and give splendid sport to rod fishers on the shore, off piers, and

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from boats. Bait with a piece of herring, and fish about mid-water, using fine tackle. These fish can be taken from the shore with a leger thrown well out in the advancing tide.

GREY MULLET

These are shrewd fish, swimming in shoals, and often frequenting the tidal waters of rivers. They feed on the bottom principally, and at low tide you may note the round holes that they dig with their snouts in the sand. Mullet will avoid coarse tackle with all the wariness of trout. They are fine, powerful fish and well worth the angler's patience. Occasionally they may be enticed with white paste or bread crust. Use roach tackle, and keep out of sight when the water is clear. But there is a poor chance of catching grey mullet in very clear water.

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RAILING OR REELING FOR MACKEREL

This is a pleasant summer pastime which can be combined with sailing. Use a swivel trace about two yards long, a sinker, and an eyed hook baited with a strip of mackerel skin, or a piece of herring whipped on the hook with silk. White flies, small spinning baits, and even a piece of clay-pipe stem will take mackerel if the bait is kept moving briskly behind the boat.

Mackerel are very nimble, handsome fish, running less than a pound in weight. They take bait boldly when surface feeding, and with light tackle they give good sport. In the autumn mackerel descend to the depths, and must be angled for with the paternoster on the bottom.

FLOUNDERS

These fish are sometimes known as

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"flukes." They like sandy bottoms and are found occasionally in fresh water above the tide. Flounders can be taken in large numbers by fishing at the flow of the tide, with a live shrimp on a roach cast, which may be well shotted, or fitted as a leger. The bait should be on or near the bottom.

SOLES AND PLAICE

Almost any soft bait will entice these flat fish when the tide is rising. They often venture close in to the shore. The tackle need not be of the finest, but the bait ought to lie on the bottom. Soles are becoming scarcer every year. Wherever there is a sandy or muddy bottom you may expect to find plaice and other flat fish, and when the fish are feeding you will soon catch a score or two with soft bait or shrimps.

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XVI

PRESERVATION AND CLOSE TIMES

It is the duty of every fisherman to assist in all means of increasing the store of freshwater fish and maintaining the standard of size. The Norfolk Broads Preservation Society and the Thames Preservation Society should be much better supported than they are by anglers who fish in these public waters. Join your local angling preservation association, if one has been formed, and if not, endeavour to found such a society by interesting fishermen in the matter.

Many miles of once fishful rivers are now devoid of fish through pollutions, poaching, and other causes which might have been remedied or checked. Un-

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fortunately, the proportion of experienced and enthusiastic anglers on fishery boards is not sufficiently large, and there is in some localities an apathy concerning the destruction of fish life. Anglers should acquaint themselves with the Fishery Acts, and see that they are enforced. They should also discourage the taking of undersized fish, and scrupulously observe the length limits.

Even when there is no limit as to the size of fish that may be taken, the conscientious fisherman will not kill undersized fish. Of course, in the case of certain over-stocked ponds, it is legitimate to take small fish, but this is an exception to the rule. East of England bream fishers have in the past been sad sinners in the reckless waste of fish. It was, not so very long ago, a common sight to see heaps of bream left to rot on the banks.

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How much trouble would it be to return them to the water alive? I was glad to note that, during a recent visit to the Broads, the fishermen mostly use a keep net, and return a proportion of their "take" at the end of the day. All good Thames fishermen keep their fish alive in the well of the punt, and put back those which they cannot use. This might be always the rule with fish that have no edible value.

The length limits on the Thames are as below :—

Trout	16 inches	Tench	8 inches
Pike	18 „	Carp	10 „
Perch	8 „	Chub	10 „
Dace	6 „	Bream	10 „
Roach	7 „	Gudgeon	4 „

The Lea length limits are :—

Dace	6 inches	Chub	10 inches
Perch	7 „	Bream	10 „
Roach	7 „	Pike	18 „
Tench	8 „	Trout	12 „
Carp	10 „		

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PRESERVATION AND CLOSE TIMES

The close times for salmon, sea-trout and river-trout, vary somewhat on different rivers. In visiting a new district, copies of the Regulations should be obtained from the Secretary of the Fishery Board. For most of the English rivers the close time for salmon is from 2nd November to 1st February, and for trout from 2nd October to 1st February. On most of the rivers of Scotland, the close time for salmon is from 1st November to 10th February. In some instances the open season is prolonged, and in others it is curtailed by a few days. In Ireland the close times for game fish vary on different rivers. Thames trout may not be taken between 11th September and 31st March. In the Severn, and some other rivers containing salmon and trout, fish may be killed all the year round. There is no restriction upon pike fishing in the Wye.

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The close season for coarse fish generally—and this applies to the Thames, Trent, Ouse, Dee, Stour, Adur, and many of the principal streams—is from 15th March to 15th June. In the Lea, the close time for pike is from 1st March to 1st August, and for other coarse fish 1st April to 1st June.

In some parts of the kingdom licences are required for coarse fishing. Salmon and trout licences are required in Wales, Devonshire, Yorkshire, and many other districts. The yearly licence for trout is usually from one shilling to five shillings. The licence for salmon varies considerably. In Ireland a sovereign is the cost of an annual licence for all rivers.

THE END

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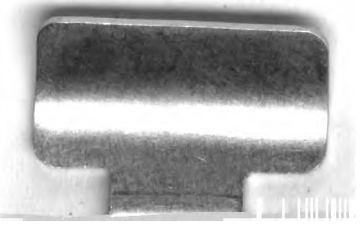

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